

UNIVERSAL  
LIBRARY



109 762

UNIVERSAL  
LIBRARY

















# FATHER'S MEMOIRS OF HIS CHILD.

BY

*BENJ. HEATH MALKIN, ESQ.*

M. A. F. A. S.

---

Great loss to all that ever him did see;  
Great loss to all, but greatest loss to me.

ASTROPHEL.

---

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR LONGMAN, HURST, REES, AND ORME,  
PATERNOSTER ROW;  
BY T. BENSLEY, BOLT COURT, FLEET STREET.

1806.



TO

THOMAS JOHNES,

OF HAFOD, ESQ. M. P.

LORD LIEUTENANT OF THE COUNTY OF CARDIGAN,  
&c. &c. &c.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I HAVE been influenced by several motives, in prefixing your name to the following pages. My pen seems destined to owe its employment, in some shape or other, to Hafod.

When I first traversed your mountains, it was without the most distant thought of engaging a set of readers as the companions or followers of my journey. The fever of authorship never preyed upon my better sense, till your magic creation in the wilds of Cardiganshire gave vent to its fury. The

singular combinations of beauty and grandeur, the contrast of wildness and improvement, to be found within the circuit of your estate, first disposed me to extend my excursion through the remaining counties of South Wales, and to attempt a description of its picturesque scenes. Your kind offer to facilitate the historical and antiquarian objects of my enquiry, on my second tour, furnished me with my original introduction to your domestic circle: and it was principally to suggestions there enforced, that this volume owes its appearance. Its first duties should therefore be paid, where they so naturally belong.

You may perhaps recollect, that while I was staying with you last summer, our conversations were nearly as rambling and as various, as our rides over your new mountain-farms, or as the subject matter of these preliminary remarks seems likely to be. We were naturally carried forward, from the rugged sublimity of nature, interspersed here with the opening promise, and

there with the thriving luxuriance of judicious cultivation;—from the forest and the field before us, into the track of human life, implicated as it is with pleasures which blossom but for a season, and pains which are indigenous, and grow rank and wanton in the soil. On these occasions, it was impossible for me not to dwell on an event, which had drawn a deep furrow over the level of my happiness. It would have been unnatural, to have concealed the mark of an afflicting dispensation, in society so capable of consoling the survivor, and appreciating the merit of the departed. In the interchange of our thoughts on this subject, the task of furnishing the public with the following facts was urged upon me, at once as a tribute to the latter, and a relief to the feelings of the former.

This had been repeatedly mentioned by others ; but I as often declined it, at least in detail. Yet, that I might not altogether oppose the wishes of my friends, I transmitted a short sketch of this little life, to be

inserted in a periodical publication, and meant with that to have closed the subject on my part for ever. Though I thought to have acquitted myself of every claim by this account, there were some persons so far interested in it, as to express through the same channel a desire, to receive the original documents from my hands. They represented with sufficient reason, that a character of such high, yet vague pretensions, required the sanction of some avowed authority to confirm its truth, and of some particular and as it were tangible facts, to exemplify its general justice.

Still I felt a reluctance, especially at that early period, to so melancholy and hazardous an office. I strengthened my previous determination by considering, how differently the world estimates the effusions which give pleasure by the family fire-side. At home, they derive a mixed value from intrinsic merit, from the partiality of kindred, and from the evanescent circumstances of local application. Add to this, that an

editor or biographer is likely to be perpetually verging towards extravagance, where his feelings are awakened and his discretion laid asleep, by personal ties and recent events. With these arguments, which had hitherto satisfied myself, I again resisted your attack. It would be impertinent, to enter further into them here. Suffice it to say, that they were silenced by those, to whose judgment I must surrender, and whose sincerity I have always found superior to compliment or dissimulation.

But I have other inducements for addressing you in the present case. Our circumstances, opinions, and conduct, have not been altogether dissimilar. We have both of us felt, I hope we may say duly, the importance of the office, which nature and society have entrusted to our care. We have both met with the best materials to work upon. In this principally do we seem to differ, that your task is now accomplished: mine, as far as the subject of these memoirs is concerned, was prematurely

closed. At my first acquaintance with Ha-fod, it seemed as if I saw, allowing for sex and contingent varieties, the consummation of what I had myself hoped and planned. It was neither in your character nor mine, to consider in a light and fantastic point of view, the duty of forming a tender mind. Elegant and tasteful accomplishments, though highly desirable as appendages to a liberal education, are the garnish, and not the food of life. The music-room and the drawing-academy, the circles of rank and of refinement, may each be allowed their attraction and their interest. The manners of the polite world are chiefly satirised by those, who have been foiled in their endeavours to insinuate themselves within its sphere. But there is a still higher ambition, of founding on the basis of useful and reputable attainments, a rational and equable constitution of the mind: a sense of human instability, to keep down the pride of condition; and sentiments of personal honour, to support its dignity. These, as

well as all the secondary objects, you have pursued with undeviating perseverance, and with correspondent success. I could point out more particularly the immediate bearing of these remarks: but my young friend, who at the age of thirteen, received from a man, distinctively and most honourably known to the public as Linnean Smith, the tribute of a commendatory and affectionate dedication, prefixed to one of his learned and magnificent works, would draw no additional honour from my public incense.

There is still another motive for this dedication, and that a selfish one. I am apprehensive, lest so unusual an appeal to public attention should, though you anticipate the contrary, bring down a severe censure on my temerity. Supposing my fears to prove true, I shall hope, as you were instrumental towards my offence, to implicate you in some share of my condemnation, and thus alleviate its weight by partnership.

Grainger, speaking of Tibullus's infancy,

has the following remark. “The human mind does not always blossom at the same period; and it by no means follows that his childhood must have flourished, whose maturer age has produced fair fruits of science. Perhaps too, details of early excellence are less useful than is commonly imagined, as they often dispirit those who would otherwise in due time have expanded into an extensive reputation.”

If it had been of little use, to have traced the juvenile proficiency of Tibullus, an elegant writer of the Augustan age, and as a man remarkable, contrary to the bias of contemporary poets, for his inflexible adherence to the principles of liberty and of the commonwealth, what excuse is to be made for dwelling on the abortive efforts of a genius, which was not suffered to hold on its course to the completion of the seventh year? Neither courts nor factions had solicited its accession to their party: the muses had not yet admitted it to their toilet, nor philosophy enrolled it among her priests.

Yet it gratifies curiosity, if it yield no profit more substantial, to be informed on what plan the preceptors of an ingenuous and enterprising youth have conducted his studies. That a prominent example should dispirit others, seems contrary to that almost instinctive emulation, which sometimes electrifies the indolent and kindles up even the dull, in the well-contested rivalships of our public schools. Where the results of a system, as in the present case, are denied to our enquiry, the argumentative application of insulated facts and fortuitous remarks is precluded. We are not to assume, that because the bud, which was cut off in spring, was fair, the fruit, had it been spared, must have been rich in autumn. Nor does it follow on the other hand, that the autumnal fruit must have put forth and germinated, with the first warm breezes of the season. But we are not to hold as nothing, what has not corresponded with our most sanguine hopes. The blossom, which was too short-lived to pamper the

palate, or invigorate the habit with its full grown and concocted substance, was still grateful in its odour and its blush. Remembrance is most sweet, and sympathy most endearing, to those whom mutual privations have brought together. Should this book beguile, but for an hour, the sorrows of a single parent, brooding over a similar loss, I shall not repent having put it together, though critics should disapprove, or my bookseller shake his head at the account.

Yet there was with me a doubt of a different nature, which took its rise from a prevailing folly of the time. The passion for infantine and puerile exhibitions, so far from having been a motive for taking advantage of the popular caprice, had almost weighed upon my mind, to defer or abandon the project, and set your friendly wishes at defiance. This town has of late been in a fever of precocious admiration; ready to catch at whatever might administer food to the rage for novelty and the surprising. The

most approved models of just recitation, of impressive eloquence, of passionate expression, have been laid on the shelf for inarticulate lispings, or at best for a parrot-taught monotony, the effect of premature and master-ridden study. The powers of music have been called in, to inspire the fatuity of childhood. Memory has been loaded with all the lumber of misplaced erudition. But these are not instances of a powerful and overtopping mind. They may be evidences of parts, but not of genius. Were I soliciting praise for a happy knack at any art, or for the mere talent of imitation, I should expect my pretensions to be treated with contempt. But surely here is something to delineate, which I could never have taught: the result of natural ability, not of laboured acquisition. something which art could never have manufactured, nor neglect have utterly destroyed. It seemed to have been the growth of the climate, unfolded and improved by culture, but not dependent on it for existence or support. On this view

of my subject, have I been emboldened to proceed; and I am not afraid, lest the hero of my tale should be confounded with the common mass and vulgar rabble of prodigies. But could it be supposed for a moment, that I brought forward the present, as a parallel or rival case, with that of the Roscii, the Rosciæ, or the Rosciusculti, I should feel nothing but disgust; and were it really so, I should deserve nothing but shame.

On mentioning my design to some of my friends, they expressed their regret, that I had not determined on it sooner. It might perhaps have been more acceptable to those whose feelings were then more immediately awakened by vicinity and personal acquaintance. The moment for complying with such temporary interest is indeed gone by. It would however have been much more proper, for these memoirs to have slept in oblivion, unless they were to carry with them their own passport, at whatever distance of time they might chance to be

of catching attention while the object is still before the eye, the interval must be considered as an advantage. Under the influence of a calamity not yet overpast, the mind must either have lost its spring, or have been wound up to the opposite extreme of wild and hyperbolical enthusiasm. In either case, the writer would have been disqualified from discharging his memory faithfully, or executing his censorial functions with any tolerable impartiality.

Judging however by a question, which has been put to me more than once, there are probably those, who may treat the exercise of such a discretion, even at the distance of more than three years, as the mark of a cold temperament and indifferent heart. I have been asked, “ How could you get over such a loss?” I need not say, that this was not your question, for you could never have found it on the list of possible interrogatories: and to you, for that very reason, will I answer it:

I got over this great loss, by consider-

ing at once what I had left; how unavailing the lengthened and excessive indulgence of grief would have been to myself, and how useless it would have rendered me to others. Why should I have locked my breast against the return of its accustomed tranquillity, when so many others wisely reconcile themselves to breaches of domestic union, irreparable in kind as well as in degree? Have you never been threatened with a calamity, which, had it befallen you in your only hope, would have pressed more heavily than even mine on me? Yet you would have triumphed, though after many and painful efforts, over the tyranny of despair. When the first agonies of childless destitution had subsided into melancholy, but resigned and contemplative thought, you would have reflected that these are the trials, which constitute the tenure of human life, even on its brightest and most attractive side. Your groves would indeed have lost their music to your ears, and their enchantment to your eyes. The rush of your

mountain torrents would have been aggravated into horror. The voice of your tenantry, breaking in as it did with unprecedented importunity on the performance of divine service at the opening of your church, had it not been heard with favour, would have sounded like the knell of all that was worth living for. Yet their necessities, their sorrow, their loss, would at length have roused you from your stupor, and taught you to find your own relief, in the habitual employment of administering to their wants.

Besides this comparison of my own, with the probable or actual circumstances of others, I bore my disappointment the better for the recollection, that personal regards are selfish. If my thoughts were disposed to dwell on the mortifying idea, that society might have lost an ornament derived to it through me, they were soon checked, and ashamed of their presumption. Topics of private bewailing or condolence, of whatever magnitude they may appear to the in-

dividual, can never be modestly transferred to general interest. But it was my principal consolation, that the change to him must have been for the better. Supposing the opinion to have been rational and probable, that the promise of this child would have ripened into something more than fair capacity and marketable talent, the prolongation of life was to himself perhaps the less desirable on that very account. It rarely happens, that the world affords even the ordinary allowance of happiness to men of transcendent faculties. Their merits are too frequently denied the protection and encouragement, to which they feel themselves entitled, from the private intimations of their own scrutinizing spirit. When they are most successful, the composure of their minds does not always keep pace with the prosperity of their fortunes. They necessarily have but few companions; few, who are capable of appreciating their high endowments, and entering into the grandeur of their conceptions. Of these few, those who

come the nearest to their own rank and standard, those who might be the associates of their inmost thoughts, and the partners of their dearest interests, are too often envious of their fame. It is a common remark, that great men are not gregarious. This is but too just; and so much of man's happiness depends upon society, that the comparative solitude, to which a commanding genius condemns its possessor, detracts considerably from the sum of his personal enjoyment.

While I am on this subject, I cannot forbear enlarging somewhat on an instance the more apposite, as being casually connected with the subsequent pages. Hitherto, it has confirmed the observation just hazarded, on the probable fate of stubborn originality in human life. There seems now indeed some prospect, that the current will turn: and I shall be eager, on the evidence of the very first deponent, to disencumber myself of an opinion, which pays so ill a compliment to our nature. In the mean

time, I am confident that you, and my other readers of taste and feeling, will readily forgive my travelling a little out of the record, for the purpose of descanting on merit, which ought to be more conspicuous, and which must have become so long since, but for opinions and habits of an eccentric kind.

It is, I hope, unnecessary to call your attention to the ornamental device, round the portrait in this book; but I cannot so easily refrain from introducing to you the designer.

Mr. William Blake, very early in life, had the ordinary opportunities of seeing pictures in the houses of noblemen and gentlemen, and in the king's palaces. He soon improved such casual occasions of study, by attending sales at Langford's, Christie's, and other auction-rooms. At ten years of age he was put to Mr. Pars's drawing-school in the Strand, where he soon attained the art of drawing from casts in plaster of the various antiques. His father

bought for him the Gladiator, the Hercules, the Venus of Medicis, and various heads, hands, and feet. The same indulgent parent soon supplied him with money to buy prints; when he immediately began his collection, frequenting the shops of the print-dealers, and the sales of the auctioneers. Langford called him his little connoisseur; and often knocked down to him a cheap lot, with friendly precipitation. He copied Raphael and Michael Angelo, Martin Hemskerck and Albert Durer, Julio Romano, and the rest of the historic class, neglecting to buy any other prints, however celebrated. His choice was for the most part contemned by his youthful companions, who were accustomed to laugh at what they called his mechanical taste. At the age of fourteen, he fixed on the engraver of Stuart's Athéns and West's Pylades and Orestes for his master, to whom he served seven years apprenticeship. Basire, whose taste was like his own, approved of what he did. Two years passed over smoothly enough, till two

other apprentices were added to the establishment, who completely destroyed its harmony. Blake, not chusing to take part with his master against his fellow apprentices, was sent out to make drawings. This circumstance he always mentions with gratitude to Basire, who said that he was too simple and they too cunning.

He was employed in making drawings from old buildings and monuments, and occasionally, especially in winter, in engraving from those drawings. This occupation led him to an acquaintance with those neglected works of art, called Gothic monuments. There he found a treasure, which he knew how to value. He saw the simple and plain road to the style of art at which he aimed, unentangled in the intricate windings of modern practice. The monuments of Kings and Queens in Westminster Abbey, which surround the chapel of Edward the Confessor, particularly that of King Henry the Third, the beautiful monument and figure of Queen Elinor,

Queen Philippa, King Edward the Third, King Richard the Second and his Queen, were among his first studies. All these he drew in every point he could catch, frequently standing on the monument, and viewing the figures from the top. The heads he considered as portraits; and all the ornaments appeared as miracles of art, to his Gothicised imagination. He then drew Aymer de Valence's monument, with his fine figure on the top. Those exquisite little figures which surround it, though dreadfully mutilated, are still models for the study of drapery. But I do not mean to enumerate all his drawings, since they would lead me over all the old monuments in Westminster Abbey, as well as over other churches in and about London.

Such was his employment at Basire's. As soon as he was out of his time, he began to engrave two designs from the History of England, after drawings which he had made in the holiday hours of his apprenticeship. They were selected from a great number of

historical compositions, the fruits of his fancy. He continued making designs for his own amusement, whenever he could steal a moment from the routine of business; and began a course of study at the Royal Academy, under the eye of Mr. Moser. Here he drew with great care, perhaps all, or certainly nearly all the noble antique figures in various views. But now his peculiar notions began to intercept him in his career. He professes drawing from life always to have been hateful to him; and speaks of it as looking more like death, or smelling of mortality. Yet still he drew a good deal from life, both at the academy and at home. In this manner has he managed his talents, till he is himself almost become a Gothic monument. On a view of his whole life, he still thinks himself authorized to pronounce, that practice and opportunity very soon teach the language of art: but its spirit and poetry, which are seated in the imagination alone, never can be taught; and these make an artist.

Mr. Blake has long been known to the order of men among whom he ranks; and is highly esteemed by those, who can distinguish excellence under the disguise of singularity. Enthusiastic and high flown notions on the subject of religion have hitherto, as they usually do, prevented his general reception, as a son of taste and of the muses. The sceptic and the rational believer, uniting their forces against the visionary, pursue and scare a warm and brilliant imagination, with the hue and cry of madness. Not contented with bringing down the reasonings of the mystical philosopher, as they well may, to this degraded level, they apply the test of cold calculation and mathematical proof to departments of the mind, which are privileged to appeal from so narrow and rigorous a tribunal. They criticise the representations of corporeal beauty, and the allegoric emblems of mental perfections; the image of the visible world, which appeals to the senses for testimony to its truth, or the type of futu

rity and the immortal soul, which identifies itself with our hopes and with our hearts, as if they were syllogisms or theorems, demonstrable propositions or consecutive corollaries. By them have the higher powers of this artist been kept from public notice, and his genius tied down, as far as possible, to the mechanical department of his profession. By them, in short, has he been stigmatised as an engraver, who might do tolerably well, if he was not mad. But men, whose names will bear them out, in what they affirm, have now taken up his cause. On occasion of Mr. Blake engaging to illustrate the poem of *The Grave*, some of the first artists in this country have stept forward, and liberally given the sanction of ardent and encomiastic applause. Mr. Fuseli, with a mind far superior to that jealousy above described, has written some introductory remarks in the *Prospectus* of the work. To these he has lent all the penetration of his understanding, with all the energy and descriptive power characteristic

of his style. Mr. Hope and Mr. Lock have pledged their character as connoisseurs by approving and patronising these designs. Had I been furnished with an opportunity of shewing them to you, I should, on Mr. Blake's behalf, have requested your concurring testimony, which you would no doubt have refused me, had you viewed them in the same light.

Neither is the capacity of this untutored proficient limited to his professional occupation. He has made several irregular and unfinished attempts at poetry. He has dared to venture on the ancient simplicity and feeling it in his own character and manners, has succeeded better than those, who have only seen it through a glass. His genius in this line assimilates more with the bold and careless freedom, peculiar to our writers at the latter end of the sixteenth and former part of the seventeenth century than with the polished phraseology, and just, but subdued thought of the eighteenth. As the public have hitherto had no oppor-

tunity of passing sentence on his poetical powers, I shall trespass on your patience, while I introduce a few specimens from a collection, circulated only among the author's friends, and richly embellished by his pencil.

### LAUGHING SONG.

WHEN the green woods laugh with the voice of joy,  
And the dimpling stream runs laughing by,  
When the air does laugh with our merry wit,  
And the green hill laughs with the noise of it,

When the meadows laugh with lively green,  
And the grasshopper laughs in this merry scene,  
When Mary and Susan and Emily,  
With their sweet round mouths, sing Ha, ha, he!

When the painted birds laugh in the shade,  
Where our table with cherries and nuts is spread,  
Come live and be merry and join with me,  
To sing the sweet chorus of Ha, ha, he!

The Fairy Glee of Oberon, which Stevens's exquisite music has familiarised to modern ears, will immediately occur to the reader of these laughing stanzas. We may also trace another less obvious resemblance to Jonson, in an ode gratulatory to the Right Honourable Hierome, Lord Weston, for his return from his embassy, in the year 1632. The accord is to be found, not in the words nor in the subject; for either would betray imitation: but in the style of thought, and, if I may so term it, the date of the expression.

Such pleasure as the teeming earth  
Doth take in easy nature's birth,  
When she puts forth the life of every thing:  
And in a dew of sweetest rain,  
She lies delivered without pain,  
Of the prime beauty of the year, the spring.

The rivers in their shores do run,  
The clouds rack clear before the sun,  
The rudest winds obey the calmest air:

Rare plants from every bank do rise,  
 And every plant the sense surprise,  
 Because the order of the whole is fair!

The very verdure of her nest,  
 Wherein she sits so richly drest,  
 As all the wealth of season there was spread;  
 Doth show the graces and the hours  
 Have multiplied their arts and powers,  
 In making soft her aromatic bed.

Such joys, such sweets, doth your return  
 Bring all your friends, fair lord, that burn  
 With love, to hear your modesty relate  
 The bus'ness of your blooming wit,  
 With all the fruit shall follow it,  
 Both to the honour of the king and state.

The following poem of Blake is in a different character. It expresses with majesty and pathos, the feelings of a benevolent mind, on being present at a sublime display of national munificence and charity.

## HOLY THURSDAY.

'Twas on a Holy Thursday, their innocent faces clean,  
The children walking two and two, in red and blue and  
green ;  
Grey-headed beadles walked before, with wands as white  
as snow,  
Till into the high dome of Paul's, they, like Thames'  
waters, flow.

Oh ! What a multitude they seemed, these flowers of  
London town !  
Seated in companies they sit, with radiance all their  
own !  
The hum of multitudes was there, but multitudes of  
lambs ;  
Thousands of little boys and girls, raising their innocent  
hands.

Now like a mighty wind they raise to heaven the voice  
of song,  
Or like harmonious thunderings, the seats of heaven  
among !

Beneath them sit the aged men, wise guardians of the poor:

Then cherish pity, lest you drive an angel from your door.

The book of Revelation, which may well be supposed to engross much of Mr. Blake's study, seems to have directed him, in common with Milton, to some of the foregoing images. "And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." Milton comprises the mighty thunderings in the epithet "loud," and adopts the comparison of many waters, which image our poet, having in the first stanza appropriated differently, to their flow rather than to their sound, exchanges in the last for that of a mighty wind.

He ended ; and the heav'ly audience loud  
Sung hallelujah, as the sound of seas,  
Through multitude that sung.

PARADISE LOST, Book x. 641.

It may be worth a moment's consideration, whether Dr. Johnson's remarks on devotional poetry, though strictly just where he applies them, to the artificial compositions of Waller and Watts, are universally and necessarily true. Watts seldom rose above the level of a mere versifier. Waller, though entitled to the higher appellation of poet, had formed himself rather to elegance and delicacy, than to passionate emotions or a lofty and dignified deportment. The devotional pieces of the Hebrew bards are clothed in that simple language, to which Johnson with justice ascribes the character of sublimity. There is no reason therefore, why the poets of other nations should not be equally successful, if they think with the same purity, and ex-

press themselves in the same unaffected terms. He says indeed with truth, that “Repentance trembling in the presence of the judge, is not at leisure for cadences and epithets.” But though we should exclude the severer topics from our catalogue, mercy and benevolence may be treated poetically, because they are in unison with the mild spirit of poetry. They are seldom treated successfully; but the fault is not in the subject. The mind of the poet is too often at leisure for the mechanical prettinesses of cadence and epithet, when it ought to be engrossed by higher thoughts. Words and numbers present themselves unbidden, when the soul is inspired by sentiment, elevated by enthusiasm, or ravished by devotion. I leave it to the reader to determine, whether the following stanzas have any tendency to vindicate this species of poetry; and whether their simplicity and sentiment at all make amends for their inartificial and unassuming construction.

## THE DIVINE IMAGE.

To Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love,  
All pray in their distress,  
And to these virtues of delight  
Return their thankfulness.

For Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love,  
Is God our Father dear :  
And Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love,  
Is man, his child and care.

For Mercy has a human heart ;  
Pity, a human face ;  
And Love, the human form divine,  
And Peace, the human dress.

Then every man, of every clime  
That prays in his distress,  
Prays to the human form divine,  
Love, Mercy, Pity, Peace.

And all must love the human form,  
In Heathen, Turk, or Jew !  
Where Mercy, Love, and Pity dwell,  
There God is dwelling too.

Shakspeare's Venus and Adonis, Tarquin and Lucrece, and his Sonnets, occasioned it to be said by a contemporary, that, “ As the soul of Euphorbus was thought to live in Pythagoras, so the sweet witty soul of Ovid lives in mellifluous honey-tongued Shakspeare.” These poems, now little read, were favourite studies of Mr. Blake's early days. So were Jonson's Underwoods and Miscellanies, and he seems to me to have caught his manner, more than that of Shakspeare in his trifles. The following song is a good deal in the spirit of the Hue and Cry after Cupid, in the Masque on Lord Haddington's marriage. It was written before the age of fourteen, in the heat of youthful fancy, unchastised by judgment. The poet, as such, takes the very strong liberty of equipping himself

with wings, and thus appropriates his metaphorical costume to his corporeal fashion and seeming. The conceit is not unclassical; but Pindar and the ancient lyrics arrogated to themselves the bodies of swans for their august residence. Our Gothic songster is content to be engaged by Cupid; and submits, like a young lady's favourite, to all the vagaries of giddy curiosity and tormenting fondness.

How sweet I roamed from field to field,  
 And tasted all the summer's pride,  
 Till I the prince of love beheld,  
 Who in the sunny beams did glide!

He shewed me lilies for my hair,  
 And blushing roses for my brow;  
 He led me through his gardens fair,  
 Where all his golden pleasures grow.

With sweet May dews my wings were wet,  
 And Phœbus fired my vocal rage;  
 He caught me in his silken net,  
 And shut me in his golden cage.

He loves to sit and hear me sing,  
Then, laughing, sports and plays with me ;  
Then stretches out my golden wing,  
And mocks my loss of liberty.

The playful character ascribed to the prince of love, and especially his wanton and fantastic action while sporting with his captive, in the two last stanzas, render it probable that the author had read the Hue and Cry after Cupid. If so, it had made its impression ; but the lines could scarcely have been remembered at the time of writing, or the resemblance would have been closer. The stanzas, to which I especially allude, are these.

Wings he hath, which though ye clip,  
He will leap from lip to lip,  
Over liver, lights, and heart,  
But not stay in any part ;  
And, if chance his arrow misses,  
He will shoot himself, in kisses.

Idle minutes are his reign;  
Then the straggler makes his gain,  
By presenting maids with toys,  
And would have ye think 'em joys:  
'Tis th' ambition of the elf,  
To have all childish as himself.

The two following little pieces are added, as well by way of contrast, as for the sake of their respective merits. In the first, there is a simple and pastoral gaiety, which the poets of a refined age have generally found much more difficult of attainment, than the glitter of wit, or the affectation of antithesis. The second rises with the subject. It wears that garb of grandeur, which the idea of creation communicates to a mind of the higher order. Our bard, having brought the topic he descants on from warmer latitudes than his own, is justified in adopting an imagery, of almost oriental feature and complexion.

## **SONG.**

I LOVE the jocund dance,  
The softly breathing song,  
Where innocent eyes do glance,  
And where lisps the maiden's tongue.

I love the laughing gale,  
I love the echoing hill,  
Where mirth does never fail,  
And the jolly swain laughs his fill.

I love the pleasant cot,  
I love the innocent bower,  
Where white and brown is our lot,  
Or fruit in the mid-day hour.

I love the oaken seat,  
Beneath the oaken tree,  
Where all the old villagers meet,  
And laugh our sports to see.

I love our neighbours all,  
But, Kitty, I better love thee;  
And love them I ever shall;  
But thou art all to me.

## THE TIGER.

TIGER, Tiger, burning bright,  
In the forest of the night!  
What immortal hand or eye  
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies,  
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?  
On what wings dare he aspire?  
What the hand dare seize the fire?

And what shoulder, and what art,  
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?  
When thy heart began to beat,  
What dread hand forged thy dread feet?

What the hammer? What the chain?  
In what furnace was thy brain?  
What the anvil? What dread grasp  
Dared its deadly terrors clasp?

When the stars threw down their spears,  
And watered heaven with their tears,  
Did he smile his work to see?  
Did he, who made the lamb, make thee?

Tiger, tiger, burning bright,  
In the forests of the night;  
What immortal hand or eye  
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

Besides these lyric compositions, Mr. Blake has given several specimens of blank verse. Here, as might be expected, his personifications are bold, his thoughts original, and his style of writing altogether epic in its structure. The unrestrained measure, however, which should warn the poet to restrain himself, has not unfrequently betrayed him into so wild a pursuit of fancy, as to leave harmony unregarded, and

to pass the line prescribed by criticism to the career of imagination.

But I have been leading you beside our subject, into a labyrinth of poetical comment, with as little method or ceremony, as if we were to have no witness of our correspondence. It is time we should return from the masquing regions of poetry, to the business with which we set out. Donne, in his Anatomy of the World, remarks the Egyptians to have acted wisely, in bestowing more cost upon their tombs than on their houses. This example he adduces, to justify his own Funeral Elegies: and I may perhaps be allowed to adopt it, as an additional plea, should my former be of no avail, for coming forward with this piece of almost infantine biography. If it be a custom, handed down from high antiquity, to enshrine the breathless clay of honourable men in brass or marble;—if poetry and the arts jointly present their offerings at the obsequies of princes, patriots, or heroes, why may not the frailty of our

hopes in private life be moralised, or the sorrows of a family consecrated, by the pen of the father or the friend? The eye, which looks through the magnifying tube of interest or vanity in the public panegyric, may be deceived in the private by affection. In either case, the good is sure to be doubled, and what is amiss to be thrown at a distance. There is however little room for my intellectual vision to be thus deluded. Partiality is the standing reproach of biographers: nor are we disposed to pass a harsh sentence against an error on the side of candour. It is natural to conceal those spots in a beloved character, which we lament; and to extinguish private vices in a radiance of public glory. But I have neither motive nor means for practising such a deception, venial as in some cases it may be. My office is of a far more humble order; yet it has soothed and rewarded me in the performance, as you predicted that it would. I had to relate, from plain and authentic documents, the early progress of

a mind, too lately come into the world, to be corrupted by it. In such a mind the springs of action were all single and simple; the virtues were just beginning to move and act under the hand of him who contrived and disposed them, without being crossed as yet by contrary forces or attractions; the love of knowledge moved forward to its object and its end, without the mercenary bias, which often draws it from its proper and more honourable course in later life. I hope to be found, neither to have mistaken the nature of my task, nor to have made too much of it. After all, it is perhaps easier to perceive than to avoid the difficulties, which lie between so modest a delineation, as would deprive the picture of its interest, and so high a varnish and finishing, as might rather bespeak the confidence of the workman, than the excellence of his subject or materials.

I regret, my dear friend, that it was not in my power to furnish you and my readers with a portrait of a later date. We

had often talked of allowing ourselves that indulgence ; but we were not privy to the event, which was to have communicated to it an incalculable value. The engraving here given, though it might well be taken to represent a much older child, is from a very beautiful miniature, painted by Paye, when Thomas was not quite two years old. He then was only beginning to speak ; but there was even at that early period an intelligence in his eye, and an expression about his mouth, which are, I hope, sufficiently characterised in the delineation, to afford no inadequate idea of his physiognomy.

There is a circumstance, to which I cannot but allude, and need do no more. The trick of converting confidential correspondence, private history, or domestic events, to marketable purposes, has been practised of late years with little remorse, and in open defiance of all prejudice on the side of decency. Yet to drag the privacy of a wife or a child into day-light, and expose to an inquisitive world scenes which

were never meant to meet the public eye, may be entered in the day-book of the literary trade, among its meanest arts. Without affecting to despise the pecuniary reward, which the labours of the pen may fairly covet and proudly enjoy, I could not but feel repugnant, in the present very peculiar case, to the idea of deriving immediately to myself any casual advantage, from setting the accomplishments of a deceased child to sale. But there is a purpose, which may be honourably promoted by such a contingency. To make some little addition to the library of the young survivors, or to their other means of instruction, beyond what else it might be thought expedient for a moderate fortune to supply, will be an appropriation strictly conformable with the turn and spirit of the departed.

With so very confined an aim, I am not solicitous that this production should circulate extensively; but I do wish, with more anxiety than I am accustomed to experience,

that it may prove acceptable among those, whom either personal knowledge or the natural warmth of human kindness may interest in the subject. Should it stagger the sceptical, or disgust the supercilious, I shall easily reconcile myself to the loss of their suffrage. Neither my measure of parental duty, nor my share of satisfaction in its performance, are to be computed by such a standard. I have waited till my passions are cooled: I have exercised the best of my memory and my judgment, without venturing further on the dangerous province of appreciation, than seemed to be warranted by the papers before me. Yet I am still aware that I write as a father; and am consequently liable to indulge myself in a more partial strain, than may meet the approbation and consent of indifferent persons. I have, however, done all I could to be temperate: if I have occasionally forgotten myself, I desire to plead before a jury of fathers, and entrust my fate to their decision.

At all events, this work, though it should escape censure, can rank no higher than a trifle. What apology must I make for addressing it to a fellow-labourer, who has accomplished the serious and difficult task of giving an English dress to Froissart? I think it was Gray, who denominated your venerable original the Herodotus of a barbarous age. But surely that age is entitled to a more respectful epithet, when France could boast its Froissart, Italy its Petrarch, England its Wickliffe, the father of our reformation, and Chaucer, the father of our poetry. If I might slightly alter the designation of so complete a critic, I would prefer calling this simple and genuine historian, the Herodotus of chivalry. But by whatever title we are to greet him, the interesting minuteness of his recital, affording a strong pledge of its fidelity, the lively delineation of manners, and the charm of unadulterated language, all conspire to place him in the first rank of early writers. The public begin to revolt from that spirit of philoso-

phizing on the most common occasions, in consequence of which our modern historians seem to be more ingenious in assigning causes and motives, than assiduous to ascertain facts. We are returning home to plain tales and first-hand authorities; and you will share the honour of pointing out the way. Froissart, hitherto inaccessible to English readers in general, from the obsolete garb both of the French and of Lord Berners's translation, may now be read in such a form, as to unite the peculiar thought and turn of the ancient with the intelligible phraseology of modern times. With my best congratulations on your success, and my earnest request to be forgiven for thus intruding on your leisure, believe me to be,

My dear friend,

Faithfully yours,

B. H. MALKIN.

Hackney, January 4, 1806.

A

FATHER'S MEMOIRS  
OF  
HIS CHILD.

INFINITE pains have been taken by the learned, in decyphering the human mind. The dawn of infancy, the meridian of manhood, and the sunset of advanced age, have respectively afforded suitable topics of ingenious or profound speculation. Yet the researches of the theorist, without an appeal to practice and experience, avail but little to direct our projects, or to console our disappointments. The decisions of philosophy have generally proved too severe, to conciliate a voluntary acquiescence; the language of its maxims has been too abstruse, to recommend itself to the general ear. When we take up the task of forming the tender

B

mind, we look to the appropriate example, in preference to the well-reasoned system: when we lay it down in obedience to an imperative decree, we more readily sympathize with a fellow-sufferer, than reason ourselves into apathy in concert with an alien to our afflictions.

The great Roman dramatist has delivered down to us a sentiment, the excellence of which has caused it to degenerate into a proverbial triteness: “I am a man; and consider nothing as foreign to my purpose, which relates to the character and condition of humanity.” The greatest possible latitude will readily be allowed to a father, who adopts this motto, when speaking in private of a heavy and recent loss: the propriety with which he may venture to interest the public in its personal application, when time has wrested from him the plea of a pardonable rashness, must depend on the facts which he has to produce, and the fidelity with which he brings them forward.

Narratives of a kind like the ensuing, however curious in themselves, call for more indulgence, than the fastidiousness of critical authority is accustomed to extend, unless they throw additional light on some principles, either useful to the investigation of science, or conducive to the interests of common life.

The influence of premature talents upon the stability of the corporeal frame, while it must often have been a subject of deep contemplation to the philosopher, has no less often made the heart of a parent to tremble, and his eye to look with dismay at the promise, which reason as well as natural pride would have hailed with joy. A very few weeks after the event, which gave occasion to the following pages, a gentleman, better known in the field of science and politics, than in the circle of domestic charities, indulged himself in a summary of the treatment, by means of which parental vanity is led to baffle its own hopes, and to exhaust the sap of life in the very springtime of its

rising, while it forces the forward shoots of intellect into an unseasonable luxuriance. "These prodigies of learning," said he, "commence their career at three, become expert linguists at four, profound philosophers at five, read the fathers at six, and die of old age at seven." A sarcasm so pointed, and apparently so applicable to the circumstance in question, uttered as it was face to face, had it been just, would have been intolerable; but failing as it did in the essential article of truth, it only served to evince the indecency and brutality of its author. Not that these memoirs are designed for an answer to so unkind and unfeeling a speech, but as a single testimony, tending to discredit the popular opinion, that children of uncommon powers or attainments, as such, are almost necessarily short-lived. Should the facts about to be stated convince the reader, that an instance, liable to be mistaken on common report for a confirmation of the prevailing idea, furnishes a pointed example in proof

of its futility, their detail will not be without its use, in enforcing general argument on the one hand, or quieting individual anxiety on the other. The just distinction, on the whole, seems to be sufficiently obvious. Where severe labour is exerted, to produce by artificial culture an early and abundant harvest, in a soil of moderate fertility, the avarice of the husbandman is not more pernicious to the glebe which he ransacks and exhausts, than the effect of such a discipline to the human frame: on the contrary, when the strength of the natural genius is not miscalculated, but its energy discreetly managed, and directed to its proper objects, the experiment will be found equally safe and satisfactory; the project in this case is not to be considered as visionary, but as entitled to anticipate a degree of success, commensurate with the honourable nature of the ambition.

Thomas Williams Malkin was born on the thirtieth of October, 1795. It is not intended to run a parallel of his infancy, with that of Addison in his assumed cha-

racter of Spectator, who “threw away his rattle before he was two months old, and would not make use of his coral until they had taken away the bells from it.” Neither would it be consistent with the respect due to the public, to expatiate on every trifling instance of infantine shrewdness, and thus to follow the example of an orator called a Gossip in the same work, who “entertains her company a whole afternoon together with the wit of her little boy, before he is able to speak.” It is sufficient to say, that the animal powers of this child, while an infant, were acute, active, and robust. Yet he was by no means forward in speaking. It was not till he was full two years old, that he began to talk; but he was familiar with the alphabet almost half a year sooner. He not only knew the letters, when given to him as toys on sets of counters, but as expressed in books, to which, from seeing them constantly about him, he directed his notice at a very early period. Before he could articulate, when a letter was named, he immediately pointed

to it with his finger. From the time when he was two years old, and the acquisition of speech seemed to put him in possession of all the instruments necessary to the attainment of knowledge, he immediately began to read, spell, and write, with a rapidity which may scarcely be credited, but by those who were witnesses of its reality. His reading and writing were remarkable principally for the celerity of their progress: but his knowledge of orthography accrued to him in a mode, sufficiently his own to evince, that he was not dependent on the ordinary mechanical process, by which it is rendered so burdensome to the infancy of the retentive faculties, without exercising the ear or the understanding. He did not commit his words to memory from a spelling-book, but caught the elements of which they were compounded, by listening to their articulate pronunciation. Thus, by consulting the sound, and correcting himself, where that might have misled him, according to the analogy of new cases with the known

custom of the old ones; he arrived by degrees at an almost uniform exactness; so that for some time this exercise of his discriminative powers was among the most amusing of his employments.

So early as before he was three years old, he had taught himself to make letters, first in imitation of printed books, and afterwards of hand-writing; for it is to be recollected, that he was left to himself, to chalk out his own pursuits of this nature. It was thought expedient to limit the province of instruction to those occasional assistances, for which the intervention of casual errors and difficulties may well be imagined to have furnished frequent opportunity. His parents would indeed have considered the attempt to impose on a child of his tender years, such tasks as he voluntarily assumed, not merely a hopeless, but a presumptuous and cruel effort. At the same time, it would have been an instance either of perverseness or timidity, to have checked his ardour after knowledge, since it cost his mind no pain-

ful exertion, neither diminishing his inclination for active sports, nor trenching upon the puerile tenor of his natural habits.

On the thirtieth of October, 1798, the day on which he attained the age of three years, he wrote a little letter to his mother with a pencil. This was the first occasion of his putting words together in writing. As it now lies before me, I find the forms of the letters to be in general accurate and well-shaped, though their sizes are disproportioned, and the lines, though few, extremely uneven. At the bottom he has written the Arabian numerals in succession, as far as the number 20. There is nothing in this letter to call for its insertion; but I have received another from a lady, which he wrote to her only two months afterwards. This is also in pencil, written much better, and sufficiently strait.

MY DEAR MISS —,

THOMAS has been reading Tit for Tat in the Evenings at Home, and Thomas has laughed at “The fellow tried, and tried, and tried.” I wish you would come to see Tom.

T. W. M.

December 1798.

The foregoing reference to a very pleasant tale in verse, in the Evenings at Home, leads me to observe, that he was at this early age peculiarly susceptible of humorous impressions, and that his quickness in apprehending the ridiculous increased with the expansion of his other powers. His laugh was so hearty, natural, and arch, that it was next to impossible not to join in it; while his mirth was occasioned alternately by subjects of a childish, or more rational complexion.

The following letters have been furnished from another quarter, and shew how ra-

pidly he was gaining ground in facility of expression.

MY DEAR COUSIN S— M—,

I HAVE a new map. Thomas can put it together—and when Mama takes some counties out, Tom can tell what they all are. I think you are very beautiful. I wish you would come and teach Tom to read Greek. Benjamin has got some more double teeth coming. Tom gives him all his playthings, and makes him very happy.

T. W. MALKIN.

Jan. 18, 1799.

It may seem laughable to find a child of a little more than three years old giving his opinion on the subject of beauty; but he was always particularly struck by it, and could describe with precision the style of

features which gratified his eye. His taste almost uniformly coincided with that of more experienced judges. He was, however, misinformed as to the ability of the young lady in question to teach him Greek; an attainment of little use to females, who do well to supply the want of it by polite accomplishments and modern languages. A short time after he thus addressed his young correspondent again.

MY DEAR COUSIN S— M—,

I THANK you for your letter. I have read it often enough. My love to you. Maps are for setting up. Papa was so good as to bring Tom maps. Benjamin hasn't lived long enough in the world to know his letters. When he is big like Tom, then Mama will buy him a box of letters. He will then run and say, Is this A?

T. W. MALKIN.

April 4, 1799.

At this time, he could read, without hesitation, any English book. He could now spell any words, of whatever length they might be, or however discordant the orthography from the pronunciation. He knew the Greek alphabet, and could read most Greek words, not exceeding four syllables. Shortly after this he amused himself with writing the Greek character, and frequently adopted it instead of his own in his little letters to his mother. He often expressed a very earnest desire of learning the language: but it was judged to be the part of needful caution in this instance, to repress in some degree the aspiring progress of his ambition.

On the few birth-days, at which it was his lot to arrive, it became a custom with him to write a letter, at the particular request of his parents. His other epistolary or fanciful compositions were preserved or dispersed, as accident might determine; but these periodical accounts of himself were carefully laid by, for the purpose of

marking the gradual expansion of his intellect, and recording the nature as well as multiplicity of his pursuits. The subjoined letters will furnish, in his own words, the best evidence of his improvement within the space of one twelvemonth, from the time when he first began to write.

MY DEAREST MOTHER,

I was four years old yesterday. I have got several new books; Mrs. Trimmer's English Description; Mental Improvement, by Mrs. Priscilla Wakefield; and a Latin Grammar, and English Prints. I think I have got a great many besides the old ones that I had before. Every day I lay up all my Maps, and Chronological Tables. My Maps and Tables are all dissected. I know you love me very much, when I am a good boy, and I hope I shall be always a good boy. Benjamin knows all his letters, except one or two, and I



I read about him being led to some of his discoveries by seeing an apple fall from a tree. And that was very pretty.... I never was drunk, nor I should'nt like to be in that shocking way a bit.... To be about to be ; —I hardly know whether that is any sense or not.... As I know I am a good boy, I believe I shall be better still.

His letter on the recurrence of his next birth-day, with an extract or two from another written some little time before, may serve to shew how far the sphere of his observation was enlarged, and his style altered. Two other letters of nearly the same period, with some additional particulars subjoined, will illustrate the mode and course of his education.



is a very nice thing, especially: for in it, there is a tweasers, bodkin, scissars, and knife to cut with, pencil to write memorandums with upon the asses skin, and there is a clasp to it on the outside to open and shut the pocket-book with. . . . Dearest Mother, as you are not well, I will do what you like me to do, to make you better. Mother, I shall read to you to-day, and to-day do some exercise. After I have look'd a little in my Latin Dictionary, which I use in my exercise, I find the words that I want to find in it. . . . I do not find the great dictionary too unwieldy for me; but I think I can manage it very well. I think I will not tell you any Latin words. At Lea-Bridge I have so very fine a view of Essex! The months of the year are January, Februay, March, April, May, June, July, August, September, October, November, and December. Civilized nations, in January, they in general agree to begin reckoning the new year from the first of that month.—Water is, when frozen, expanded;



*Extract from a Letter dated Oct. 10, 1800:*

IN my Mental Improvement, I have read that the wood of the beech-tree is useful to the turner for dishes, trays, &c. and that the upholsterer forms it into stools, &c. and I have not forgotten that yet. I read that in the second volume. My father has told me, that the Romans used to oil their bodies, and make them active, and I have not forgotten that yet, neither. In the Latin language, thousands more are of the feminine gender, than I know. Some are masculine, some neuter. I know a good deal of geography, and I shall be very glad, too, when I know a great deal more; for geography, I find, is a very clever thing for me to know. I know a deal of Latin. I think I know a little French, but no Welch. I know no Greek, neither. God bless you, my dearest mother and father, and I hope



The Oka is in Russia, the Wolga in Russia, the Unza in Russia, the Peza in Russia, the Choper in Russia, the Usnema in Russia, the Kama in Kasan, which is a part of Russia, the Tornea in Sweden, the Pithea in Sweden, the Ebro in Spain, the Guadaluquivir in Spain, the Tajo in Spain, the Onega in Russia, the Rhone in France, the Garonne in France, the Loire in France, the Seine in France, the Lea a small river in England, the Po in Italy, the Teyss in Hungary, the Danube waters Germany, Turkey in Europe, and Hungary, the Priniez in Poland, the Berezino in Poland, the Elbe is in Germany, the Weser in Germany, the Oder in Germany, the Samara in Tartary, that is not Chinese Tartary, the Dnieper in that same Tartary and Poland, the Kuban in Circassia, the Vistula in Poland and Russia, the Maes in the United Provinces, and the Dnieper in Little Tartary and Poland and Lithuania. From Spain, we get wines, figs, several drugs, cochineal, balsam of Peru, borax, pistol-barrels, ver-

million, sword-blades, indigo, raw silk, oil, pomegranates, almonds, raisins, olives, chestnuts, lemons, snuff, hams, iron, saltpetre, fine wool, oranges, sarsaparilla, cocoa-nuts, citrons, and Spanish pepper. You have a letter that is not so long; in it I tell you positively, the river Minho is in Spain.

T. W. MALKIN.

Blackney, Monday, Dec. 1, 1800.

MY DEAR AUNT —,

I WANTED very much to come and see you, but when I was a little boy, I went; however, it is such a long time after, that I do not remember it. I am learning Latin, and I know a good deal of it. I think I can read Greek\* a little too, and my Father thought I got on a little with French, only I have left it off. I have a

\* The Greek character only.

great Latin Dictionary, I think I learn a great deal from it. I too have an English exercise book, and I do Latin exercises from it. You know, there is corn in August. In July, the fruits which are ripe, are very cooling and refreshing; such as cherries, currants, strawberries, raspberries, and goosberries. An oak is a very handsome tree. We have a book, and it is Robert Burns's Poems, which I am very fond of; however, it is mostly of the Scottish kind, which I do not understand: but also, there is a glossary at the end, and it teaches me any word which I do not know. There is about the two dogs in it; and about John Barleycorn; and a great many other things which I do not know. Water is expanded, when frozen. January is, in this part of the world, the coldest month: for, you know, there is frost and snow in that month; and hoar-frost is dew, or mist frozen. Then the wild quadrupeds too are driven from their accustomed remote haunts. The valley swells to a shining mountain. The

snow-drop, and crocus, peep above the ground in February. In March, too, it is very cold. But when will you come and see me? I wonder you do not; and should be very glad if you would. There is such an animal as an antelope, and hippopotamus, and Giraffe, and Tapiir.

T. W. MALKIN.

At this time, he had advanced so far in Latin, as to write an exercise every day with a considerable degree of accuracy. It seemed to be a leading object of his ambition, to make himself master of the dead languages. To this end, it was his constant practice, to make enquiries of a description, far removed from that mechanical routine of study, contentedly paced over by many scholars of a more mature age. Thus was his memory not only furnished, but his comprehension enlarged. By these means, he

gained a clear insight into language, its structure and its progress. The questions he was now in the habit of putting, were often such, as would have occurred to few boys, who had doubled his years. His evident pleasure, when they were satisfactorily resolved, proved his curiosity not to have been more alive to the difficulty, than his understanding to the solution. He was capable of dieting his mind, with more than ordinary relish and perseverance, on what is generally considered as the dry and husky food of elementary knowledge. It was with the utmost avidity, that he looked for my assistance, in comparing the idiom and construction of the examples in the Latin syntax used at Eton, with the idiom and construction of his own and the French languages. Indeed, his acuteness in tracing the etymology, and reducing to their elements the component parts of words, pursuing them through English and French, and enquiring after their forms in Greek and Italian, ground as yet untouched by him,

evinces a mind more than commonly fitted for philological pursuits.

Some sentences of a paper, referring to the present date, may be considered as worthy of insertion, with a view to illustrate his facility in applying the general principles of language, as well as his capacity for comprehending them.

One evening in November, 1800, as the family were sitting at their usual employments, Thomas amused himself by looking over a French Dictionary, and endeavouring to find out words, to be fitted into something as much like sense, as might be practicable for so inexperienced a workman. At this time he knew little of French; from the Latin conjugations however and declensions, he understood the use of a French grammar lying by his side. With this help therefore, he attempted to put the nouns and verbs, as he found them, into the case, number, person, and tense, according to his apprehension most consonant with what he designed to express. He had never re-

ceived any methodical instruction in French, but had been in the habit of examining with some diligence the contents of the dictionary and grammar. Yet had he never till now given any reason to suppose, that he could turn his little knowledge to so ready an account. Laborious as this mode of composition may appear to have been, he carried it on to a considerable length. The beginning, written in Roman characters, is a mere chaos of words, with but a ray of meaning now and then. As he proceeded, in the course of a single evening, he improved so rapidly in his new art, that some of the periods exhibit an attempt not far short of regular and grammatical construction. The following are among the most intelligible sentences.

Je vois, que vous mouriez bientot. Que je mourusse de poison, je le mangerai.

Ablution donne nous grand amusement.

D'Abord, nous vimes quelque chose qui etoit tres curieux. Je pensai, le fut (probably meant for qu'il fut) Moulin-a-vent.

Secondment, nous vimes un maison ; troisiemement, nous vimes un eglise ; et quatriemement, nous vimes un homme et femme promenant ensemble.

Maintenant (apparently used instead of quand) nous sommes mort, nous serons mis dans tombeau.

Un homme, quand il est vivant, il courre.

A Noël, nous serons pris jusqu' en ciel.

It has already been observed, that for a long time he had read English with perfect fluency. I know not, whether I shall incur the suspicion of hyperbole, by adding, that he now understood it with critical precision. Neither was his attention confined to words. He never passed over any passage, the style or subject of which might happen to be obscure or difficult, without an attentive enquiry into the nature of the subject discussed, as well as the grammatical construction. Thus he spared no pains, either to satisfy his doubts, or enlighten and invigorate his conceptions. In the few volumes, which were set aside as exclusively

his own, he seldom suffered even errors of the press, so trifling as those of punctuation, to pass without being marked by a pencil he kept for the purpose. His books engaged his earliest attention in the morning; and it was rarely that the allurements of the breakfast-table could prevail with him to leave unfinished a story in which he was interested, or a lesson in which he was not perfect.

It may be necessary, after these statements, to repeat the remark, that notwithstanding these studious inclinations and habits, he was still a child of a manly corporeal structure, of buoyant spirits, with a degree of activity sufficiently suited to his years. When engaged in play, he was as much a child as other children; and derived as much pleasure from his diversions, as if his thoughts had never expatiated beyond them. But as soon as he was weary of his sports, he generally returned, with increased avidity, to his books, his maps, or his pencil. Lounging was altogether excluded from

the list of his pleasures; neither were his mind or body assailable by the hostile power of indolence, because he knew it to be the bane of all improvement.

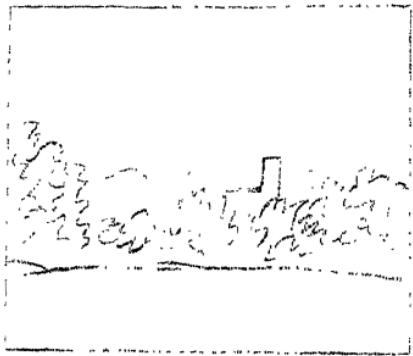
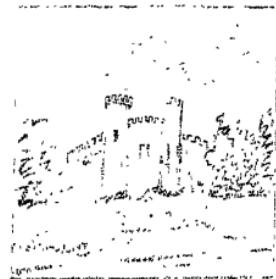
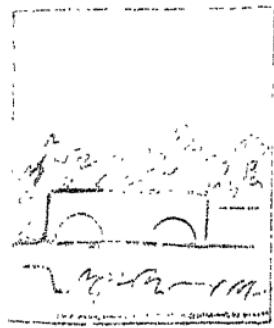
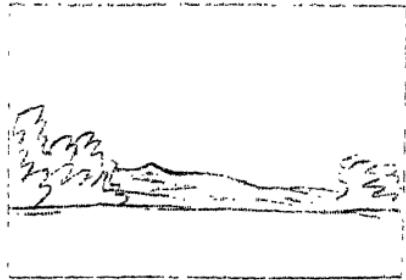
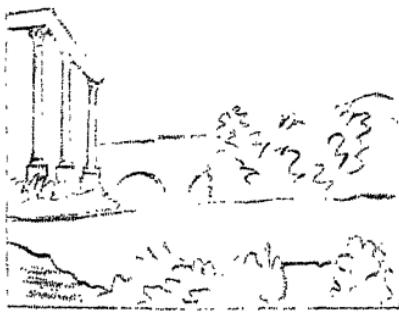
He had acquired a most happy art in copying maps, with a neatness and accuracy, an idea of which I have no means of conveying to the reader. Were one of his performances in this line put into the hands of an engraver, it would contract a stiffness, destructive of its identity. The specimens in my possession are curious and beautiful. Those which he has reduced by his eye, are equally accurate with what are imitated in the size of the original.

With respect to the productions of his pencil, he had now, for a considerable time, made drawing a principal source of entertainment. In the desultory pursuit of it, without any professional assistance, he had acquired no common facility of execution, and derived from nature a happy talent of original invention. It would indeed be the height of absurdity, to claim the merit of

precision for his best specimens. His worst however were not devoid of something like ingenuity of design. He has produced copies from some of Raphael's heads, so much in unison with the style and sentiment of the originals, as induced my late excellent and ingenious friend Mr. Banks to predict, that if he were to pursue the arts as a profession, he would one day rank among the more distinguished of their votaries. The whole length of Paul preaching at Athens, from the Cartoons, copied on a reduced scale, in a very few lines, proved that he had sufficient feeling to trace his master through the clumsy disguise of Dorigny.

But he had a remarkable habit of inventing little landscapes; for which purpose he was accustomed to cut every piece of waste paper within his reach, into squares of the size represented in the annexed plate: These he filled with temples, bridges, trees, broken ground, or any other fanciful and picturesque materials, which suggested themselves to his imagination. They are





traced faithfully and exactly from the originals; so that they require little comment. There is a decisive idea attached to each of them: the buildings are placed firm upon the ground; and there is a general taste in the disposition, and variety in the designs, the result of a mind gifted with just feeling, and fertile resources. His performances of this kind were so numerous, that these plates might have been multiplied to a considerable number; but the six here selected were thought sufficient for a specimen of his talent in composition.

Yet, as my panegyric on such a subject can carry with it no recommendation, I subjoin the testimony of Mr. Blake to this instance of peculiar ingenuity, who has given me his opinion of these various performances in the following terms.

“ They are all firm, determinate outline, or identical form. Had the hand which executed these little ideas been that of a plagiarist, who works only from the memory, we should have seen blots, called masses;

blots without form, and therefore without meaning. These blots of light and dark, as being the result of labour, are always clumsy and indefinite; the effect of rubbing out and putting in, like the progress of a blind man, or of one in the dark, who feels his way, but does not see it. These are not so. Even the copy from Raphael's Cartoon of St. Paul preaching, is a firm, determinate outline, struck at once, as Protagenes struck his line, when he meant to make himself known to Apelles. The map of Allestone has the same character of the firm and determinate. All his efforts prove this little boy to have had that greatest of all blessings, a strong imagination, a clear idea, and a determinate vision of things in his own mind."

I understand that I have been censured for extravagance, in consequence of having said in another place; "the character of his mind may be comprised in these few words. He remembered whatever he had once known, and could do whatever he had once seen done."

I shall not however be deterred from adding here, that he could imitate whatever lay before him. Several examples are now spread upon my table, where he has copied the most dissimilar hand-writing on scraps of paper, or covers of letters, with the exactness of a fac-simile. His own hand continually varied, and was altogether of a different character from that of a child. He never had any writing-master; nor indeed any instruction, but what he procured at home. He was however for the most part a tutor to himself; requiring neither excitement nor coercion to regulate his habits and employments.

Having transcribed the letters of his preceding birth-days, I shall conclude the short series with that written on his last, though several others may perhaps be found to be more interesting, some of which will be selected in the sequel. It may be necessary to explain, that on this occasion, the business of the University required my attend-

ance at Cambridge, whither the following letter was addressed.

Hackney, October 30, 1801.

MY DEAREST MOTHER,

NEXT time you go to Cambridge, if you will allow it, I should be very glad to accompany you there, for the sake of having a ride. I hope before you return, you will be so good as to write me a letter in answer to this, and I shall be most happy to receive it. As you one day said you hoped I would hear Benjamin read and spell to me, I promise to do it some times when I have leisure to hear him, and when he is in a humour for it: and I shall teach him as near as I can to the manner in which you do. I am in great hopes you will think well of this letter, for I am sure I do all that I can to put it into your power to do

so. I hope you will trust that the great and good God will make us both better still, though I assure you I have this morning had very serious thoughts of being much better now I am six. However, I still think there is much room for improvement in us both, especially me, if God spares our lives, that we improve in them still more. I hope, that you think all this about improvement is a very good subject. Till you return, my intention is to do as near as it is in my power to what I imagine you would like. I trust Cambridge is a healthy place for you and my Father; and when you write to me, I should hope you will tell me in what state of health you are, for I should rejoice most amazingly at knowing how you was. At first you told me you would excuse the drawing, and every thing of that sort; but I went to business on my birth-day, and did just the drawing. When you are from home, it is always a pleasure to me to think that you are in good health, or that you have met with no misfortune in

any way, at least. . . . Ben, I trust, will read and spell to me well; for you know, the better he does it, the more improvement he will gain by it, and the more useful it will make him. He seems to me to be a very good little boy, altogether, while you are gone. . . .

I hope you will believe me

Your most affectionate son,

T. W. MALKIN.

As a parent, deeply interested in the object of my affection, I cannot but regret that a more numerous collection of anecdotes has not been made, relating to things said and done by this uncommon boy. Yet, though all might have been insufficient to gorge the appetite of individual craving, what is here committed to the press may

not improbably be thought to have overcharged the subject, as far as general curiosity is concerned. To myself I reconcile what now appears carelessness in the preservation of these fragments, by considering that the event, which has made the possession of such memorials peculiarly desireable, was little to be expected. As an excuse for presenting them thus copiously at the fastidious tribunal of public criticism, I may, not without due allowance, plead, that such registers of early proficiency are both useful and interesting. Those who have the rising generation under their eye, whether as parents or preceptors, may gather many a significant warning from the successes or failure of their predecessors. While we trace the actual progress of an almost infantine mind, through knowledge up to virtue, we at once ascertain an important fact. Wherever the physical and intellectual powers are endued with suitable vigour, it is within the province of education to impart an early taste for elegant and

rational pursuits; it is within the latitude of a discriminating judgment, to abridge the mental imbecility of childhood, without quenching the natural and salutary fire of the animal spirits. To aim at those frivolous accomplishments of declamation and histrionic exhibition, which may manufacture pertness in a boy, but will never send a man into the world, is the reproach and folly of our present times. Not for such attainments do I contend; but for the timely cultivation of useful and substantial knowledge, stripped of its wilder, and as we may call them, forest shoots, by the urbanity and good temper of those who superintend its growth. Without good temper and forbearance, (if it be allowable to employ a second metaphor on one subject) every other virtue, belonging to the domestic character, is cast into shadow. The colouring of sincerity, without such a mellowing infusion, darkens into a ferocious misanthropy; the parent and teacher degenerates into the pedagogue; the friend is lost in the stern mo-

nitor, and the careful steward of the future is forgotten in the rigid controller of all present indulgences.

The acquisitions of this child have hitherto been the theme of these memoirs. But they, pleasing as the topic may be, must be kept down in a due subserviency to a higher object. Short indeed was the time that glided by, without unfolding some new beauty of his character and disposition. The narrative would be enlivened, if more story were to be thrown into it: but he had contracted so constant a habit of committing his thoughts to paper, that it seemed sufficient at the moment to preserve what he had written, without recording what he said. I shall therefore, without reference to times or seasons, select such of his letters and other compositions, as mark either the peculiar bent of his mind or versatility of his talents. They will be accompanied with such occasional explanations, as may be necessary to render them intelligible, and then left to find their own level. It is hoped

they will carry with them internal evidence, that they have not been contaminated by any attempt at artificial heightening, or by the vain conceit of piecing out an imperfect sentiment from confused ideas and half-formed sentences. I may have erred on the side of partiality; but it has been my sincere wish, to draw a portrait from the life, and to take nature for my standard, neither working up the tone into a meretricious glare, nor enlarging the dimensions of the design.

Of all the features I have to delineate, there is none so striking, as a pious tendency of thought, perhaps unexampled at his early period of life. The following pages will bear so frequent testimony to the truth of this, that it will be unnecessary to enlarge upon it here. It may not however be impertinent to observe, upon a part of his history, open to suspicion with a certain class of readers, that this train of reflection accrued to him principally from his own internal feelings. It would have been profane in-

deed to have discouraged it; but we were far enough removed from the atmosphere of fanaticism. Never therefore would it have entered into our system, to have forced the premature consideration of mystical or speculative theology upon a tender mind, against the current of nature; neither should we have run so directly counter to the dictates of common sense, as to have incurred the danger of disqualifying him for the present world, by an unseasonable preparation for the future. His piety, like the melancholy of Jaques, was his own. It was animated by a natural warmth, but had no fuel applied from without, to kindle it into a self-destroying blaze. Nearly the whole of the following letter exhibits so forcibly his sentiments on this head, that I shall insert it at length.

Grove Place, Hackney, Sunday Evening,  
Jan. 22, 1802.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

My anxiety of writing to you has proved the action quite necessary, having a good deal to say about the little child which the incomprehensible Almighty has, with all his wonderful works, given you reason to know will come. I certainly think it exactly true that it will come, by your saying so; though I should not have, of course, believed it so stedfastly, if you had only thought so: but now I will return to the subject, not of your thinking that it will come, but of the infant itself.

What use can it be of either to you or me, if I do not love it? But I shall love it as much, or more than I did Benjamin when he first came, if I am not too much concerned about any thing, or especially Allestone, to think of it at all, which I dare

say, I shall not be. I should love it whichever sex it was of; but, as I told Miss —, in my last letter which I wrote to her, I should love a sister rather the best, as you know I have a brother already.

Indeed I find that in another case this address to you is necessary, for in it I would tell you many subjects which I wish to hide from any other person but yourself. I dare say the lesson that my brother and you read, and also you alone, will in the end prove both very entertaining and instructive, and will cause me to make very good resolutions. I promise from henceforth to read and study a good deal in that holy book, for both entertainment and instruction; and also make a constant, and perhaps everlasting resolution, of attempting to receive instruction from the Bible. Henceforward this resolution will for a long time get the better of me, and perhaps, as I also may say, for all my life. I wish it may be long, hardly at all for the sake of fortune, being so much less important than piety and good-

ness, and as God cares so much more about it, that I may have time to fulfil my resolution, which I dare say is in yours, and I am sure in our heavenly Father's opinion, good. But I will not get into that conceited way of thinking my own promises good: I had much rather have a better subject, as you say. I think myself very happily circumstanced to have such a good mother and father. I think I could not have a better one. I also confess that I ought to think myself in the same happy state as I do. God grant that your life be long, that you may keep your disposition towards us and the next little child you have! In trouble I intend to attempt in future to console myself if I can with the thoughts of your tender disposition towards us; if, as I have great confidence it will, it lasts for ever. I shall be very happy to receive your positive answer; but I mention it late, because I have many other better subjects to tell you of: I will speak of one of them now.—If I fulfil the former resolution, which I shall

certainly do, if I keep it till I grow up, and do not leave it off then, I dare say I shall find it all ends in happiness: and then I should perhaps reflect how much more unfortunate it would be, if all my infantine time had been spent in vice. I from henceforth also promise to do your will always (in which subject the letter will terminate)—in every thing: and to obey the Almighty's will the same.

Believe me, my dear Mother,

Yours ever,

T. W. MALKIN.

As they are connected with that part of his character, at present under contemplation, and at the same time furnish a proof of his imitative powers, the following psalm and prayer are submitted to the attention of

the reader. The prosaic measure of Sternhold and Hopkins is made to appear still more limping by the absence of rhyme; but the decent and solemn march of the Collects in the Book of Common Prayer is not unsuccessfully represented, while the choice of words harmonizes duly with the style of those venerable compositions. The date is May 20, 1802.

## PSALM CII.

I CALL to the Lord,  
When I am in pain,  
I cry to him involved in woe,  
He list'neth to me.

Let man praise the Lord,  
That weak worthless thing;  
With cymbal, flute, let him applaud,  
And sing to my God.

The Lord will be praised,  
And also 'tis right,  
T' obey his will, and t' exalt him,  
For he'll have it done.

## A PRAYER.

WE humbly beseech thee, most gracious God, to keep us from all sin; enable us to obey thy will; endow us with all good qualities, and keep us from all bad ones; to preserve us from danger, and repay us duly as we deserve. And all this to enable thee, thy dear Son, and the Holy Ghost, to think it proper to esteem us in a proper quantity; (not fearing that it will be in a proper, as I know thou art always a righteous judge) and to go on doing so for ever and ever. Amen.

Addison, in one of his papers, written to recommend the cultivation and improvement of our church-music, speaks in the following terms of the elegancies derived to our language from the infusion of Hebra-

isms, and the adoption of the poetical and pious phraseology in the inspired authors.

“ There is something so pathetic in this kind of diction, that it often sets the mind in a flame, and makes our hearts burn within us. How cold and dead does a prayer appear, that is composed in the most elegant and polite forms of speech, which are natural to our tongue, when it is not heightened by that solemnity of phrase which may be drawn from the sacred writings. It has been said by some of the ancients, that if the gods were to talk with men, they would certainly speak in Plato’s stile; but I think we may say with justice, that when mortals converse with their Creator, they cannot do it in so proper a style as in that of the Holy Scriptures.”

On the model here recommended by Addison, had the compilers of our liturgy already formed the national service. The little prayer I have inserted appears to me to have copied the copies, without burlesquing the original; and I much question,

under the censure of such great and reverend prelates be it spoken, whether some of the occasional petitions and thanksgivings, which have issued from the modern bench, bear upon the face of them so plausible or deceptive a conformity.

Closely allied to a pious turn of mind, is a just deference to riper years and natural authority. This child, though actuated by the impulse of strong and lively feelings, was even at such an early period so much under the influence of reason, as to be always ready to check the most ardent desires of the moment, when they were represented as inexpedient or improper to be complied with. Neither was his conviction, in these cases, difficult to be procured. A refusal neither called up his tears, nor sunk him in a sullen silence. He soon brought himself to believe, that any occasional check or remonstrance arose only from a wish to give him a right understanding of the duties he had to perform, and the sentiments it became him to cultivate. Indeed, he was

always observed to derive a more than ordinary pleasure from the society of his friends, when any little circumstance had occurred, occasioning them to give him any serious advice.

After the preceding remarks, it will scarcely be necessary to say, that his disposition was truly affectionate. Even here too, in the very overflowing of his nature, he shewed his mind to be well constituted, and his feelings under proper regulation. His natural notions were not yet stretched on the rack of pure, unadulterated justice: neither would he have broken the magic of the selfish and family pronoun “My,” by saving the life even of Fenelon, in preference to that of his own father\*. His love branched out, according to the design with which it was implanted, from his parents to his next kindred and connections, and thence in succession to more distant friends. Of this also some instances will now be adduced.

\* See Enquiry Concerning Political Justice, Book 2.  
Chap. 2.

It will there be seen, that he felt a kind and anxious interest in whatever related to persons whom he knew; and had conceived a more accurate idea, as to the concerns principally engaging the attention of adults, than is generally imparted to children. It is the easiest department of education, to communicate the knowledge of words; and teachers by profession, whose time is their estate, are happy to satisfy the demands of their employers, without entering on the more difficult province of things.

Hackney, 1802,

**MY DEAR FATHER,**

You will perhaps be surprised to hear from me, but to answer an intention which I had to-day, I now happen to have an opportunity of writing to you, which I use in as early a time as possible for me. You will perhaps, and as I also hope, fly

into great enjoyment at the receipt of this letter, as all my intention is, to do it out of compliment. All my hope and solicitation of you is, to receive a letter, at least if you have a minute or two, which is all I solicit, to spare, from you, which I shall return eagerly to read. I certainly shall enjoy a letter from you as much as from any body, as I do not know of my ever receiving a letter, or even a note, before. I have done most of the business for you of the day; and, when we part, if ever we do, (though I do not think it likely) I shall perhaps long to get to my own beloved home, and you, again. I do not say I shall never meet with any disorder, as certainly it cannot be determined, except by the Almighty; but, if I do;—

Yours ever,

T. M.

Hackney 1802 -

My dear Father -

You will perhaps be surprised to hear from me, but to answer an Intention which I had to-day, I now happen to have an opportunity of writing to you, which I use in as early a Time as possible for me. - You will perhaps, as I also hope, fly into great Enjoyment at the Receipt of this Letter as all my Intention is to do it out of Compliment.

Hackney May 1st - 1802 Saturday Morn

My dear Uncle

line or two It was my intention to write a since I have done so, because it is my pleasure and also I guess it to be yours. - My first enquiry shall be into your health, whether you go on well and other things which I will mention afterwards. -



The next specimen is addressed to a gentleman, holding the office of judge in Canada, to whom, as a family connection, Thomas was in the habit of writing an annual letter. The hand-writing is remarkably pretty. He wrote on these occasions *con amore*, as his pride was a little touched with the idea of his letters being thought worth transmitting across the Atlantic. The superscription, in due form, runs thus:

*Mr. Williams,  
a Lawyer,  
Quebec,  
Canada.*

Hackney, May 1, 1802.  
Saturday morning.

MY DEAR UNCLE,

It was my intention to write a line or two to you; both since it is so long since I have done so, because it is my plea-

sure, and also I guess it to be yours. My first enquiry shall be into your health, whether you go on well, and other things which I will mention afterwards.—Now for an account of the little baby.—He grows very much, and talks in near the same quantity; he has just been inoculated for the cow-pox, which has proved very successful towards him; he has been christened Frederic, and I love him very much. An enquiry is into the going on of your affairs (not because I too much interest myself in your affairs, since that is rude) but because I, intending to be civil, concern myself partly in your ways. I was determined not to make myself content without giving you a little information about several of the ways in which we go on (besides the baby, which I, as you know, have before told you of). For example, I will now tell you of my learning.—I go on very well in my Latin, and have just begun arithmetic, and I hope in time to do as well in the attempt. Now for a little information concerning Benjamin.

He is but very slow in learning to write, and not much quicker in his Latin. I am sorry to give you an account which is at all unfavourable; but, as it was my proposal to tell you of Benjamin, I could not give you a true account without making it as I have. I have made an undertaking to teach him to write, and also to teach him Latin, gradually as I learn myself. It is hard to say which I shall succeed in, if in either; but it is uncertain if I shall succeed in either.—I wish it was possible for us to see you; as it would be an equal joy to see you at Quebec, as at home.—But since the occurrence cannot happen without such an infinite source of trouble to you or us, I must satisfy myself with hearing from you; which I should like almost as well, being in general a boy that is well enow satisfied with the welfare he can have, which is always the best possible. I suppose you have long wondered at my not writing for such a length of time, as well as of my mother's stoppage between her last and next letter,

so that in case you should, I set about writing, that your wonder (if you have any) may be satisfied.—In one case at least I shall be glad if you do; because altho' it was not, it is now my purpose to satisfy it.

Yours affectionately,

T. W. MALKIN.

P. S. If you will have the goodness, (if you have time,) to write me a letter, I should think myself indebted, as well as obliged to you; tho' I do not care whether it is a folding or two of a letter to my mother, or a whole letter: and, provided it contains some information, I do not care whether little or much.

It must have been just after some unlucky instance of more than common idleness that Thomas took up his pen, to have extorted from him so unfavourable a report of Benjamin's capacity and diligence. Thomas, like all those who have a just title to be critical, was ever disposed to be candid ; and was never backward in bearing testimony to the merit of his brother. Yet as the latter makes his appearance here to a disadvantage, it would be unfair to let the present occasion slip without observing, that Benjamin has hitherto discovered a sufficient aptitude for learning, and a laudable thirst after knowledge. If he has not displayed his brother's superlative genius, he has already done enough to heal the wounds of pride, though those of affection can never be closed. Such a loss must ever be a subject of regret ; but it were ungrateful to aggravate that regret into repining, when the breach is repaired to every reasonable extent, by the promise of producible talents and an amiable heart. It appears by the

preceding letter, that Benjamin was learning Latin when he was between four and five years old. At the present time, when he is just eight, his progress is, to say the least of it, very respectable. But he seems particularly to aspire after a branch of knowledge, to which Thomas was but beginning to attend, and apparently with no very eager zeal. Benjamin began to learn arithmetic about two years ago; not from any supposed necessity for so early an entrance upon what is generally considered as a dry study, but led to it by a natural direction, the signs of which were as visible in him, as the bent to belles-lettres pursuits was evident in his brother. He is now become remarkably accurate in all his processes; and capable of carrying on in his head, without the assistance of noting them down, a very considerable series of computations. As an instance of this faculty, while he is now sitting at my elbow, I have desired him to calculate in his mind how many changes may be rung on ten bells. He tells me, that the number is

three million, six hundred and twenty-eight thousand, eight hundred. I am willing to give him credit for having brought it outright, and to spare myself the trouble of going through so long an operation upon paper as he has done without it. He has advanced as far as the double rule of three in vulgar fractions; and just now tells me, that he has forestalled his master, by finding out of himself the rule for the addition of decimals, which he accomplished, by observing carefully how the first sum was worked in the book, and by this he knew how to do all the rest. He is learning French rapidly, and takes much pleasure in it. He seems also to have an inclination for drawing, which will not be suffered to languish for want of encouragement. Next to goodness of heart, the surest indication of a valuable character is a general taste for letters. This he caught from the example of his brother, and reads the best English authors on polite or entertaining subjects, with a due share of discrimination. His temper is generous and

affectionate; his manners open and engaging.

But it is time to resume the main subject. Thomas had a very delicate sense of propriety; and was always much afraid of being thought too inquisitive. In his letter to his uncle, as above, he disclaims “ interesting himself too much in his affairs, since that is rude;” and in another letter to a lady, he thus expresses himself to a similar effect: “ I hope, if you write me an answer to this letter, you will be so good as to tell me about the health of your family, &c. and other sorts of things which I hope I am not impertinently curious to be acquainted with.”

The following passages will shew, that he interested himself very warmly in that great domestic event, the birth of a child. He was indeed better acquainted with the circumstances attending it, than many persons might think either necessary or expedient at so early an age.

If it has not been laid down in express

terms, as a fundamental principle of certain modern philosophers, that all facts are to be stated in the broadest language, that the veil of what has hitherto been called decency, is to be rent asunder as the covering of affectation or hypocrisy, these monstrous consequences flow at least as natural corollaries from the leading propositions of the system. Kept in the rear, and reserved for the heat and confusion of the battle, they take the lover of novelty by surprise: had they been drawn out on the roll of regular forces, the device on their banner would have shocked the public eye, by the open defiance of correct feeling, by the utter subversion of morals and happiness. But there is another extreme, equally fatal to purity of mind, though less hostile to a salutary decorum of manners. It is the vice of almost every nurse, and of no few parents, that those coincidences attending the increase of the species, which must soon attract the curiosity of children in numerous families, are not only to be disguised from

from their natural enquiries, but wrapped up in absolute falsehoods and manifest absurdities. The new-born brother must be dropped from the clouds, or dug up out of the garden, to throw a meretricious varnish over a tale, which nature would tell in terms the most endearing, and nothing but an imagination, prurient in the extreme, could ever have represented as indelicate. To avoid both these errors was an object aimed at in the present case: whether it was in any degree attained, may be inferred from what follows.

*Extract from a Letter dated Jan. 27, 1802.*

I now write to say that my mother cannot favour you with the action, (probably of writing) and also to inform you of the coming of a little boy who was born yesterday.—My mother has been long ex-

pecting it, and also hopes you will write her and me also, a nice long letter soon; as I have no doubt it will be the former. The reception of it will be a great gratification to me, as very likely, at least to me, that of this letter will be the same to you.—I will now with great pleasure inform you, that my mother is tolerably well, and has as little illness as can be expected from the coming of a child; and I also inform you, that the child is a very healthy little boy, and that my mother of course hopes, and also thinks, that it will live. I should like from thence to hear in your letter to me how your mother goes on, and whether her rheumatic complaint gets any better or worse.—I should also like to hear of General —'s fare, as yours is a family which I am perhaps as much concerned for as any one. You would gratify me if you would in your answer describe your thoughts of the little boy just born yesterday, by my account: and also tell me how you would like a first sight of it. In my opinion it is a very fine

child ; and I also with pleasure hope and trust that it will both live from its appearance, and form a good life: also it is to be trusted by me that it will be obedient to its good, kind, and attentive parents. .... All this family are in perfect health except my mother, who cannot certainly be expected to be in health just a day or two after the coming of a child. But I hope your family, except your mother, have the same fortune as the chief part of my own. I am interested with the welfare of your mother, being the same about your family: for who can be interested about the whole of your family, without being interested about her ? You know that people could not be so; ....

*Extract from a Letter dated March 7, 1802.*

I HAVE haste to comply with my great desire of writing to my dearest Miss —, to give her my sincere thanks for her last kind address to me. Perhaps you was somewhat disappointed at my silence; and in case you should, I now write, that your disappointment may not increase.... Frederic, as my mother also tells you, continues without ailment, except his pain, which does not alarm me; but to return to the subject of our welfare, and to the interrogation of your own—as I have a sort of pleasure both in the description of ours, and the interrogation of yours, I have now an opportunity to tell you of them, which I will make use of.—We have lately gone on very well, and the nice little Frederic has I believe a week or ten days lost his pain, which same pain I spoke of when I

said, “ Frederic, as my mother also tells you, continues without ailment, except his pain, which does not alarm me.” It would be happier without pain; but what a blessing from the Great Being to keep him without ailment!—He is now two days older than seven weeks.—I rejoice at the getting well of my mother, for two reasons which I do not hide from your intelligence; one, because she is more able now to attend to me and my brother Benjamin (though to Frederic equally); and the other, because I like her company, as she is so important a relation of mine.—

Yours affectionately,

T. W. MALKIN.

The following extract from a letter, written nearly about the same time, refers to his plan of an imaginary country, somewhat similar to Utopia. Not that he had ever heard of that celebrated romance; but his own ideas suggested a system of visionary perfection, such as probably presents itself to most ardent and virtuously disposed minds, in nearly the same shape. The allusions must be left to be rendered intelligible, when the history of Allestone comes to be explained.

“ Now to the dear little brother, whom every body (not excepting you) admires.— He is grown a very great fellow since you saw him last, and I dare say you will admire him very much. .... I am sure you are right, my ever dear friend, in saying that I am fond of the dear little Frederic. I intend to let him go to the famous university of Lalldab, not to be taught by Alcander, (you know who I mean) but by a famous orator, who may be named “ the master of all Lalldab,” but his proper

name (I mean his Christian) is Adoleo de Levie."

" I am sure I should very readily let your mother see my map, &c. &c. if I could, being in connection with such a friend of mine as " she whom I am addressing;" and as soon as Frederic has received as much tuition from the orator, he shall be taught arithmetic by Dr. Scluggish, as he is a great mathematician. I intend him to be taught the classics by the orator.—But now a little account of his health ; . . . ."

Having dwelt perhaps more than sufficiently on the style and spirit of his correspondence, it is now time to exhibit some other specimens of his ingenuity and talent. General observations almost always fail, in giving any thing like life or body to the drawing of a character. Description requires to be particularized by anecdote, or it only amuses the imagination, instead of coming home to the feelings. To illustrate, by circumstances, the turn of this boy's mind in conversation, before we proceed

to his works of a more fanciful complexion, may probably increase the interest, as well as diversify the tenor of this narrative.

When he was a little more than five years old, Thomas, sitting at dinner with a knife in his hand, asked the following question. "Pray, Mother, what is the opposite to sharp?" He was answered, "Blunt, my dear." On this he immediately observed, "Then my knife is very blunt; for I cannot cut with it." His little brother Benjamin, two years younger, wished to have some share in the conversation, yet without perceiving thoroughly the drift of what had passed. He therefore enquired, "What is the opposite to a door?" His mother replied, "I know of no opposite to a door. The qualities or circumstances of persons or things, by which their resemblance or opposition is marked out, are usually expressed by adjectives. The noun substantive simply represents the person or thing itself." Thomas without hesitation interposed with this remark. "But there are opposites

among nouns, you know; at least in nouns of behaviour. Guilt is a noun, and it is the opposite of innocence."

We were seldom, if ever, in the habit of testifying in his presence, any surprise or admiration at the most apposite and ingenious of his remarks. Though it was by no means to be wished, that he should entertain a disparaging opinion of himself; neither was it the least of our happiness to find, that he was sufficiently modest in comparing his own with the talents and attainments of other children. To have lighted up the embers of vanity, by an ill-judged and extravagant applause, would have been the excess of silly fondness. Yet were it impossible not to have felt an inward glow of pleasure on this occasion, at his not only so clearly comprehending the reply to his brother's question, but adducing so appropriate an example in support of his own distinction.

About the same time, on being told by a lady, that she would send for him on the

following day, when he should draw as much as he pleased, he said with some degree of impatience, “ I wish to-morrow would come directly.” After a short pause, during which he had leisure to recollect himself, and resume the philosopher, he enquired, “ Where can to-morrow be now ? It must be somewhere; for every thing is in some place.” When he had considered a little longer, he added, “ Perhaps to-morrow is in the sun.”

“ Learning is not so much esteemed by wise men, as it is despised by fools.” On meeting with this aphorism, which struck his fancy as a mere play upon words, without any real meaning, he thus corrected it by an extemporaneous remark. “ I think the person who wrote that sentence was himself very foolish ; for wise men esteem learning as much as possible ; and fools cannot despise it more.”

The occasion on which he wrote the following paper, will in some measure account for the confusion and incoherence of the

thoughts in some places. He happened to be in company, where pen and paper were given him, with a request to write a little essay. As he hesitated on what subject to fix, his friends suggested that of Spring. While he was engaged upon it, several young men and boys, who were present, were continually playing with him, and interrupting the train of his thoughts. Taken as he was by surprise, and allowed no leisure for previous reflection, the closeness and regularity, of which he would otherwise have been capable, were not to be expected. Add to this, that his attention was divided by surrounding objects, and the whole composition occupied no more time than was required for him to write down his ideas as they arose. It seemed necessary to premise thus much, because the paper would not have been inserted, but for the circumstances under which it was produced.

AN ESSAY UPON SPRING,  
IN PROSE.

“ At the approach of spring, I must confess that some distinguishing is made from the crocuses, polyanthus, &c. and all those early-coming-in-the-year flowers; and after a fading of them, it is evident to me that a surety of spring’s arrival advances forward. Next, of what merit is it to exercise the pleasantry of spring, if it takes off the necessary attention to your real exercise of mind? There, if that happened, might as well be no spring. How destitute of worth are they, who take great exercise of legs, if it takes off their attention! They might as well be shut out of the world. It is true, it is one of the most beautiful of all the seasons; but then it should not interfere with real business. It is to be sure necessary to the health at proper intervals,

though negations may be made: those negations would do no good. People, even not possessing prophecy, may bode that; for you may depend, it would be true. It is a rule with my parents to tell me, not to let amusement interfere with business, but to take amusement at proper intervals. Exercise of limbs in April or May, would probably be the amusement; for though I have not heard this yet, I dare say I shall in future. This is all, what I partly think, and partly know; so it is all a sort of certainty. This is a running-thro'-the-country subject with Allestonians, as they have often the same subject in their heads. Spring, as Allestonians say, on fine days, and adapted partly, does good to the health; and a just saying for the country, as they say no sayings but just ones. Nothing can be truer than that; for a favourable account must be always given of that virtuous people. This is as much as I have to say; the conclusion is, that I think spring will last as I've described."

Writing fables was an employment of his pen, in which he particularly delighted. His invention was quick and various ; but the unity of the story cannot in general be supposed to have been very consistently supported, nor the moral drift to have been always very obvious or pertinent. There was however, for the most part, more meaning than he well knew how to express. His thoughts often wandered from the straight forward road in which he was travelling ; but he did not look with a vacant or a drowsy eye on the various objects in his wild excursion. The two following fables have each of them the same title ; but their subject is altogether different. The date of the first is Sept. 15, 1801. That of the second, May, 1802.

## FABLES.

## 1. THE HORSE AND HIS MASTER.

A HORSE, passing by a well with his master, one day, which was very deep, said to him, I am very thirsty; may I go and drink out of that well? Yes, said his master, if you do not want a great deal. No; said the horse, I don't want much. Then you may, said the master. Then the horse went, and presently came up again. Now, said the master, you are a very good horse for coming up so soon: you may always go again when you ask. May I? said the horse. It seems then, I have a very good master. They continued their journey home, and got home after a walk of a mile and a half. When they arrived home the master took his horse into the stable, and sometimes went to see how his horse went

on. One day, when the master went to see his horse, he found him in a bad state of health; and presently the horse died; and the master survived him, who often wanted to ride, and could not.

### A FABLE;

NAMED,

*THE HORSE AND HIS MASTER.*

ONE day, it came to pass, that a farmer, having a great loss in the way of beasts, from a disease in them, which suddenly arose, and without his knowledge for a time, had much ado to keep as many of his beasts alive as he could, employing horse-doctors, &c. But here is an exception to what I have said.—One of his horses proved very healthy for this unhappy happening, though his health was affected; and the master, thinking it a good thing for him to be in

the air, they set out together. The horse soon said, "I am very hungry; and, as those are your hay-makers, can you suffer me to eat a little of your hay?" He replied, "I can." So the horse, thanking the farmer for his grateful allowance, went and eat some, and in a little time said, "Have I had enough?" The farmer answered, "You have had the allowance I give you, if you have satisfied your hunger." The horse said, "I have." So they went on, and arrived at a paper-mill, the owner of which the master was acquainted with. So, as he went in, he left his horse waiting at the door, guarded from robbers by a dog, who was accustomed to the office of barking, and driving away any marauder that chanced to lie in wait of robbing the master of his horse. But the master soon came out of the place, and led his horse homewards, when the horse said "I find I have reason to regard this dog as yourself, he behaves so well in defending me from robbers." The farmer replied, "You in my opinion have."

So the horse, meditating for a little while, found out a new discourse to take up; and said, “In one case I am not certain whether I shall like home or not; which is, in case the disease should kill me.” After an answer of the master’s, they got home, and the disease killed both him and his master.

#### MORAL.

“They who fear generally cannot avoid bad chances.”

The psalm, already inserted, has been noticed for its quaint resemblance to the old translators. With this exception, Thomas had hitherto indicated but little of any poetical propensity in himself, though his reading turned very much on poetical subjects. The fire burst out suddenly and by accident; but it lasted a very short time. The effort of attaining so many perfections at

once, as are required in this species of composition, was greater than to admit of being frequently repeated at his tender years. The abrupt manner in which it was called forth, is perhaps the most curious circumstance attending it.

One evening, he was with a lady, who was in the habit of amusing herself occasionally by writing verses. This happened to be her employment while he was with her, and he interrupted her rather too frequently. She therefore requested him to find some entertainment for himself. While he was deliberating on his choice, she proposed to him to follow her example, and endeavour to write some verses. Without a moment's hesitation, he took pen and paper, and in a very short time produced the following lines. His friend, with whom he was passing the evening, had taken it for granted, that he was merely transcribing some passage from memory. She was therefore not a little surprised to find herself the occasion of his first poetical essay.

These verses appeal so forcibly from every rule of methodized style or thinking, to a new-born, natural, and vigorous artlessness, that it would be both unjust and impertinent to consider them as subjects of criticism. Yet a remark or two, for the purpose of elucidation, will scarcely be censured as superfluous, since the operations and progress of his mind cannot be supposed to lie so much open to the reader of these pages, as they had long done to the close inspection of the writer.

The subject of the opening lines is poetical. The thoughts, as far as this descriptive strain extends, are for the most part clothed in appropriate diction and harmonious numbers. As he proceeds, he glides imperceptibly into a more didactic style. Here, it must be confessed, he often loses sight of the poet; and relapses so nearly into prose, as only now and then to retain any portion of rhythm. Yet even to the last, though wearied and exhausted with so

unusual an exercise, he recollects himself occasionally, and produces a firm and metrical line. After all, it will appear on perusal, that where he failed as the bard, he could still support the character of the reasoner. The ideas follow one another in a just and regular concatenation; and generally find expressions suited to their tenor. The argument constantly presses forward, without being drawn aside, or in danger of escaping from our hold, to run after foreign objects or incongruous speculations. Had the author of these lines been better acquainted with the mechanism of versification and regular arrangement, which practice would have mastered by degrees, he would have had no reason to despair of becoming a poet.

IN me delight is spread, to mark th' approach  
Of Spring, when roses and all other flowers  
Scatter with beauty the new-moistened ground  
Of the then bright'ning year: to mark their shew

Delightful to the eyes of infancy,  
— in which happy time  
The playfulness and thoughtlessness of life,  
In the pursuit of sometimes sportive tricks,  
Some bad, some harmless, but amusing;  
At least in childhood then: the weakness of the mind  
In infant time, insensible of what  
Will often happen, in afterward repentance!  
The wisdom of good child'ren, whose small  
Ability they own, who're not inclined  
To praise themselves;—exert their power to the end.  
Their power soon does end;—  
While man, grown up with the not many years  
That human creatures have, who all complain  
Of swift time's short'ness, altho' when good  
Are taken to another better world,  
Where then they know no pain,  
No sickness, no disaccommodation ever.  
But everlasting happiness is spread  
Over the place, where then we think no more  
Of the great agonies we undergo  
In former life, in the so much worse world,  
Though not always, but very often bad,  
Which it would not have been, if not made so  
By the now artful work of its inhabitants,  
Either to good, or sometimes to bad things:  
But I have reason to suppose, 'tis most to bad.  
When bad people are sent to that most miserable place,

Confin'd in chains, fire, and everlasting pains !  
 How great then, I may say, is the difference  
 Between the bad and good ! How different is  
 Their afterward existence !  
 When sent to bounty, or to pain,  
 No resemblance appears among the change  
 Of scenes, some more beautiful, and some more ugly :—  
 And the more joyful scenes of Heaven :—  
 Where the Lord's everlasting praise does never end ;  
 We then employ our everlasting time  
 In nothing else, but the 'fore-mentioned praise.  
 When good boys think upon their future happiness  
 In heaven, they reflect with joy :—  
 ——————How joyful it must be  
 To be before the presence of the Lord !  
 Oh ! Then how pressing is th' idea of the end  
 Of the infamous man ! When we reflect  
 On his approach to death, loaded with crimes !  
 In three days he's sent down ! And then confin'd  
 In chains unknown ;—exists there all the time !  
 The good man then, at least his soul, flies up  
 To everlasting happiness.  
 Oh ! then how horrid must it be  
 To be a naughty man ! Then to reflect  
 On th' good man's happiness above ! Then how  
 Superior it is with the good man !  
 ——————His former state  
 Is also happy, as well as in the future.—

And two men being good, when one reflects  
Upon the other's goodness, it contributes  
To th' happiness of the reflecting man.

T. W. MALKIN.

Feb. 3, 1802.

Shortly after this he made a second, but far less successful attempt. It is indeed so confused, that only the opening lines, and another short passage, as a specimen, are worth inserting. The letter, with which he presents it to his grandmother, is worth transcribing on two accounts. It gives his own explanation of the design, which prevailed in his mind, while writing both poems; and at the same time shews how sensible he was, that a courteous manner, in offering any tribute of respect, contributes infinitely more than the value of the gift, to render it acceptable.

Hackney, Feb. 15, 1802.

MY DEAR GRANDMOTHER,

As I have heard that you know the already written poem, I have taken a sheet to write you another.—This will perhaps please you as well or better; for I both intend it to be a little on the subject of the world, and chiefly on my great wish of its improvement.—You will perhaps be in some surprise at hearing from me so soon again before an answer to the other letter—but the compliance of my wish is very necessary; for I would much rather not send a poem to you, than send it without a letter accompanying it, to beg you to accept of it.—I besides account for it to be more civil to beg somebody to accept of any thing, that I write to or for them, than not. It is very just, as was my observation in my last

letter, as you know, that I should rejoice at another sight of you.

Believe me,

Yours affectionately,

T. W. MALKIN.

I beg you humbly to accept of these lines :

WHEN the Spring comes, her warm embrace  
Is pleasant to the infants, who are glad  
Of her approach, blooming, and softening their cheek  
Delightful to be sought in painting, and with joy.  
Sweet infancy! But, rather, void of love,  
The infant's knowledge is but small:—

After some sentiments, not very intelligible, about teaching languages; and after a repetition, in other words, of his former prolixion on the sportive tricks of children, he goes on to personify Excellence, and speaks of her in the following terms:

It may be necessary again to guard against an impression, which this solitary attempt at dictating to his genius must be calculated to convey. It was indeed a slight and transient deviation from the general plan of entrusting his progress to his own will and pleasure, or at most of only following, where he led the way. But I cannot, for the sake of those parents who may hereafter be similarly circumstanced, inculcate too strongly my conviction, founded on experience, of the proper and rational method to be pursued, in educating a child of superior endowments. Acting to the best of our judgment in the present case, we were not particularly eager to impart knowledge by direct, regular, and long continued lessons, or more fashionable lectures, involving, as they must have done, an irksome and unhealthy confinement. We thought it more for his advantage, to lend ourselves as much as possible to his service, by being ready at all times to answer his questions, to resolve his doubts, and to satisfy his curiosity. His

mother and he were so little asunder, that all her acquisitions were incidentally, and almost without design, communicated to him. If the difference between him and other children was at all to be attributed to any other cause, than his own ardour and industry, it is in this point, that his domestic circumstances might be considered as favourable. His instructors were not pertinacious or scholastic in the exercise of their office; but they had his welfare too much at heart, ever to have neglected their charge.

But the most singular instance of a fertile imagination, united with the power of making all he met with in books or conversation his own, remains yet behind. This was the idea of a visionary country, called Allestone, which was so strongly impressed on his own mind, as to enable him to convey an intelligible and lively transcript of it in description. Of this delightful territory he considered himself as king. He had formed the project of writing its

history, and had executed the plan in detached parts. Neither did his ingenuity stop here; for he drew a map of the country, giving names of his own invention to the principal mountains, rivers, cities, sea-ports, villages, and trading towns. As learning was uniformly the object of his highest respect, and principal attention, he endowed his kingdom most liberally with universities. The professors, whose offices were some of them mentioned incidentally in a preceding letter, were appointed by name; and numerous statutes were enacted, which for their grave promulgation would scarcely have been disowned by more ancient and venerable founders.

The map of Allestone, in whatever light it is viewed, is a very remarkable production. Crowded as it is with names, some absurd, but others ingenious and appropriate, it evinces an uncommon fertility of invention. The drawing is executed with care, and the propriety of the design made happily to coincide with its whimsical and ca-





pricious humour. Excepting perhaps in one instance, and of that I am so doubtful, that I shall leave the reader to find it out, there is no violation of nature or probability. The country is an island, and therefore the better calculated for the scene of the transactions he has assigned to it. The rivers, for the most part, rise in such situations, and flow in such directions, as they would in reality assume. Their course is marked out with reference to the position of principal towns, and other objects of general convenience. The map is therefore not so much to be looked at for the neatness of its appearance, and the symmetry of its proportions; but as an exercise of the mind comparing the propriety of its own nascent ideas and inventions, with the performances of adult artists, founded on observation and authority.

The history of Allestone is ushered in with so pompous a "Prospectus," that I suspect its phraseology to have been partly copied from the Proposals of some periodical publisher, which might happen to have

been lying by him at the time. It is indeed a complete burlesque. He tells us, that, “No people, especially Allestonians, have been more wonderful and remarkable in the work than the Nimesbeians, having exercised their part in it with the utmost cleverness and knowledge. They are also remarkable for their attachment to the soil.” From this last attribute of the Nimesbeians, and others which follow in the original, it may without hesitation be concluded, that the pattern of all this shrewdness and nationality is to be found in Scotland. It gives an air of probability to this conjecture, that “they love to dwell on the beauties of its lofty hills, and to expatiate on the noble and bold edifices of their old ancestors; especially to dwell in that noble castle, just by that famous mount, the mount Birfilace.” The prospectus closes with the usual information, that “It will contain the following views:

Wallace Rock, between Nimesby and Lalldab:

Nimesby Castle, near Nimesby:

Old Ruins of Pistilgo:  
Waterfal of the River Nimesby:  
The River Nimesby:  
Countib sea:  
Forgiveness Gulf:  
Nimesby:  
Lalldab:  
Lalldab Castle, Lalldab.

The history itself is involved in no little confusion and uncertainty. From the eccentricity of the project, and the unfinished state in which it was left, I shall not aim at reducing it into form; but merely select a few specimens, for the purpose of marking, what form his ideas assumed, and how much they partook of his own natural character. It is written in a series of letters, and may truly be said to begin from Leda's egg. It sets out with the birth of the first king, in the first year of Allestone.

“ He had no mother, or father, as he was the first Allestonian born. He could not certainly receive great instruction, being without parents: but as soon as ever he was

able to begin learning, he practised as much as he could. He, however, by his diligence, attentive thought, and industry, also well-timed magnanimity, generosity, &c. acquired wonderful instruction. When he was six or seven years old, he undertook a journey to Charmchock, in which he was very successful."

The people appear to have arrived but by degrees at that state of moral perfection, which Thomas imagines them to have attained in his own time. We are informed in one of the earliest letters, that King James the First was of a bad disposition, and committed suicide. In the next, the scene is varied to a more agreeable subject, by the birth of some Allestonian children.

"The principal of them was very good: he learned every language of my imagination, and when he grew up, was continually building, and things of that sort."

In another place, he asserts "this history to be a rational work enough." Such a claim is perhaps only to be admitted with

a certain measure of allowance. Whether it in any degree maintains its pretensions, may be decided on the evidence of the following letters.

#### LETTER IV.

By this time, the kindness of the manners of the Allestonians was fortunately increased. The then present King, George the First, was of a good, amiable disposition, and placed himself on the throne when he was about ten years of age: and a very proper time, too. He was good all through his life; kind to his subjects, good-natured to every thing that belonged to him; but what I have already said is enough of that subject. His subjects, and also every thing of his, were kind in return.

## LETTER V

THE Allestonians lived in good houses. The Allestonian houses were chiefly built of stone, &c. The Allestonians were very clever people. The dress of the men of Allestone was, and is, very commodious. They, in their houses, wear nothing on their heads, and wear no cravats. In their walks they have a little flapped hat, which has a ribbon almost at the top, with a buckle to keep it on. The men have a small head. They wear no waist-coats, have a linen shirt, and quartered shoes, one flannel shirt, and wear brown breeches.

## LETTER VI.

THE Allestonian women dressed themselves in a commodious way. They wear their hair with a toupée: hoops are usual here: the ladies wear a shift and two dimity petticoats, and a long gown. When they go to church, a fan is necessary to their dress. Allestone increased with numbers of Allestonians. They were all of a good character, and were inclined to generosity. One of their principal acts of generosity was, that one of them gave another a telescope, and the one which was treated with it said to the other, “ I’ll give it back to you again, Sir.”—That was when King James the Third was present; a good king he was. He placed himself on the throne directly he was born, which was in 288.

## LETTER VII.

IN 288, two more Allestonians were born. They were good. It soon occurred, that they chose to live together; and the one carried the other to the place where he chose them to live. Before long, two Allestonian children were born to them. The other ones took good care of their children, so as to educate them well. They grew up to be clever men. In 289, they found that the revenue of Allestone amounted to eight thousand millions. They were very much surprised to find, that the revenue of their country was so great. They were also glad: I think they ought to be.

In addition to this political history, we find a series of private and domestic adventures, founded on the personal virtues and characteristic pursuits of the Allestonian people. Their merit is various. They sometimes hit point blank, at other times drop short in their flight, like the random arrows of an unpractised marksman. The story of Adoleo and Ophelius begins thus : “ The governors of Allestone, who had much knowledge of good nature and candour, settled a plan of benefiting the country. There came two men, the one named Adoleo, and the other Ophelius; while the one I mentioned first was thirty, and the latter twenty-nine. They were also good-natured and candid, and thanked the governors for receiving them kindly. The governors let them stay for five years, and I will relate all that happened during that time.”

The narrative of their fortunes, with their rencounters and escapes, is not very consistently made out. The pathetic cir-

cumstances are left in a mysterious and awful obscurity, under which a dramatist or novel-writer would have sheltered his inability to explain all the intricacies of his own plot. We are given to understand, that the younger of the two had occasion to undertake a journey to Malleb. The nature of his business there is by no means too tediously particularised. It appears plainly however to have incurred the censure, as well as excited the apprehensions of the elder; as we are informed in the following account of their meeting. “A few minutes after Ophelius arrived at the palace, ‘Ophelius,’ said Adoleo, ‘do you know, that I was in pain about you all the time you were in Malleb, lest any thing should have befallen you that was dangerous: and I am very glad to see you come home safe.’ ‘I thank you,’ replies Ophelius, just as he was going up stairs: ‘I have been in no danger at all.’ He presently went; and while he was gone, Adoleo could not help reflecting with scorn and horror upon the journey of Ophelius to Malleb.”

The biographer of these visionary philosophers and politicians had a greater charge upon his hands, than he well knew how to manage. Yet did he perceive many leading features both of morality and policy. As an instance of this keen regard, he was sensible how forward it stood in the list of a statesman's duties, to keep a strict eye on all the transactions, taking place within the limits of his department, and therefore sanctioned by his authority.

“ Ophelius found one of the governors writing a letter up stairs, and at the same period of time keeping watch over what was going on in the front road before the Councillian palace, in which the governors lived. Ophelius was in another room, doing some sort of business of his, which I cannot relate; but, though his business was not quite such a long time doing as the governor's, he waited to accompany his lord, (as he used to call the former) down stairs.”

The next story is on a less ostentatious subject. Filial duties and conjugal affec-

tion are the topics of domestic interest. With due allowance for some little inconsistencies, and a few inconsequent parts, this tale is not without something, which reflects the image of the writer's pure and feeling mind.

## STORY II.

### THE FAMILY.

ONCE upon a time, in a pleasant street in Countib, that was about a mile off from the palace, there lived a young lady, who had before rather an unfortunate life. Now I intend to relate all that happened in her life; which was well worth describing, after she grew up. As soon as ever she grew up old enough to be able to look for a house by herself, she settled a plan of doing it, and began to look out for one as fast as she

could. She got that with much ado, after taking a great deal of necessary trouble for one, and after searching all over a great many towns for one, till at last she got to Countib, and went into a house from fatigue, to see if it was empty. She looked all about the house and found it so. Nobody can think how glad she was that she did find it, having taken so much trouble before. As soon as ever she had searched the house, she went to the parlour in great sorrow, took place of a great-chair that was there about, and began to reflect on her offences before to her parents, whom she lost when she was only a little after eleven years old; and after she had reflected about a quarter of an hour, she began to think of one, that in a few moments was so deeply impressed upon her mind, that she was almost ready to faint. She began, in a few days, to think she chose to look out for a husband, and presently set about it; and though this was with a great deal of trouble, it was with less than her house. She took

son, “ if I was old enough, I should have liked to have written to her.” “ So should I,” replied his Papa. Their conversation ended.

The fourth story is entitled, *The Lady and the Villager*.

The fifth, *The Man and the Cottager*.

These two seem designed to inculcate condescension in our behaviour towards those of a station inferior to ourselves ; but they contain nothing sufficiently marked to render them subjects of curiosity.

The sixth story, *The Cottager’s Daughter and the Hospitable Gentlewoman*, is, to use the author’s own words, “ an example of the Allestonians’ affection, civility and attachment.” It represents the visit of a cottager’s daughter, who was very poor, to a Mrs. Benson; “ and as the poor girl was terribly cold, (as it was a cold day and season,) she went trembling to the fire at Mrs. Benson’s, who received her very hospitably.” The remainder of the relation is occupied

with the description of the benevolence exercised by the patroness, and the gratitude of the dependent.

In the seventh, he seems to allude in some degree to himself and his own employments. The latter he notices with an obvious partiality, and dwells on the interchanges of kindness with unwearied pleasure. These were the favourite topics, on which his mind delighted to dwell; and he indulges the expression of his feelings to satiety.

## STORY VII.

### THE LITTLE BOY AND HIS FRIEND.

ONCE, a little boy happened to have a desired errand over some fields: and in an hour or two he arrived at “the beloved house,” as he used to call it, which he was

sent to. There he behaved very civilly; and his beloved friend, in a little time, perceived his behaviour so applausive, that she made a resolution in her heart (without communicating it) to relate it to all her friends, whom she saw. He bestowed his errand upon the good family, for which all the people present (except him) thanked him. The little boy did not enter into any conversation for some time: and, in a minute or two, a little girl came, gave a knock at the house-door, and was admitted. She, after pulling her things off, addressed the family in the following kind manner:—“What, my friends, have you got my brother here?” One of her friends replied, “Yes, dear Ablyth, and we are overjoyed to see him. He is now drawing at that table.” The little friendly Ablyth, presently, without giving her dear friend an answer, went to the table, and looked over her kind, well-intentioned brother for a few moments, who was drawing from an original, which was very interesting, and (as I

may say) pretty. But the affectionate little boy presently rose up, and solicited one of his friends to permit him to leave off his work for a time, that he might converse with him. The good lady replied affectionately, “ Yes, dear Adoleo, if you choose.” The little boy made a stop in his speech before he went on with his conversation, and his stop was so long, that one of his friends was going to send the little Adoleo back to the table; but before she could speak, the little friendly young lad presently said to his dear, beloved friend, “ Do you, Madam, know any thing of my little imaginary kingdom, indeed I may say country, for it has no provinces?” His correspondent presently replied, after reflecting a moment; (as she had once seen a map of it, but she did not recollect it:) “ No, my little Adoleo, not that I recollect.” The little friendly boy replied, making use of his good memory, “ Oh! my friend, you have once seen my map; but I will bring it you again, if you have a mind to see it.”

The lady replied, recollecting when she saw the map, "I have." The little boy, and friendly Ablyth, presently went away. There are several examples of the Allestonians' attachment, affection, and civility, in this story, the same as there is in the sixth.

From the prolixity, with which the slender incidents of the preceding tale are related, and the frequent recurrence of the same ideas, some apology may possibly be expected for its insertion. These specimens are all of them given with all their faults; since it is conceived, that the latter are of a nature to detract little from the general merit, while they vouch for the fairness of the representation. It has indeed by no means been my wish, to lop off the excrescences from the vital parts, or to place the defects and weaknesses, which pervade the performances of such a novice, beyond the reach of critical inspection. Such an at-

tempt might have carried the sensations of the reader to that giddy height, to which they are elevated on the perusal of a romance; it might have rendered a circumstance of surprise more surprising, or a subject of admiration more admirable, than it really was: but it would have thwarted the more rational design, of furnishing remarkable and well authenticated facts, to prove, from individual instances of early talent, the natural strength and lofty destinies of the human mind. Is it in philosophy or common sense to imagine, that superior powers are kindled in a mortal frame, only to blaze as the meteor of a moment here, and then to be quenched in everlasting night? If nothing is made in vain, the bud of genius and virtue, when scorched by untimely blasts, must open again in some more genial climate. All the skill of artificial temperature will scarcely keep alive the rare and delicate productions of the tropics, in these our northern latitudes: but we do not thence infer, that this debility is constitu-

tional; or that they do not flourish unassisted, beneath the parental influence of a nearer sun.

But these Allestonian speculations were not confined to the invention of such little stories. Their author had made a very small progress in the difficult task of devising a language, and compiling a dictionary, for his invisible subjects. The inflections of his declinable nouns were determined by the model of the Latin; but their root was the product of his own whim, and their rhythm tuned to his own ear. As a specimen of this bold attempt, are subjoined,

## SOME ALLESTONIAN CHRISTIAN NAMES OF WOMEN.

### A.

Aria, (delight) Aria, æ.

Abrily, (beautiful) Abrila, æ.

Agshitha, (joy) Agshitha, æ.

Ablyth, (gracious) Ablyth, indecl.

Absha, (governing the people) Absha, æ.

Ablaria, (honest) Ablaria, æ.

Ablary, (unassuming) Ablary, indecl.

Abishy, (good) Abishy, ind.

## B.

Bevitha, (like Bevilona) Bevitha, æ.

Begshy, (certain) Begshy, indecl.

Bevilona, (modest) Bevilona, æ.

Bevith, (good) Bevith, i.

## C.

Carolet, (noble) Carolet, indecl.

Carolia, (good) Carolia, æ.

Corintha, (descended from Corinth) Corintha, æ.

Cebola, (valiant) Cebola, æ.

Citha, (capable of cyphering) Citha, æ.

Carolina, (good) Carolina, æ.

## D.

Darolia, (virtuous) Darolia, æ.

Darish, (good counsel) Darish, indecl.

## E.

Earia, (comfort) Earia, æ.

## F.

Farish, (famishing) Farish, indecl.

## G.

Gadegunda, (flourishing) Gadegunda, æ.

Gadegund, (good) Gadegund, indecl.

The precise time at which these various essays and prolixions were committed to paper, is not in general ascertained; but the following bears date, September, 1801.

## ALCANDER AND SEPTIMIUS.

## A STORY.

ALCANDER and Septimius had long been accustomed to be the friends of each other. They, when one was thirty-two, and the other thirty-four, had a great desire to live together. So, according to their wish, Septimius caine to live with Alcander, and they were fellow-students together; but Alcander did rather teach Septimius, than Septimius teach Alcander. They studied very well, (that is, upon a very good subject;) and afterwards remarked, and really found, that it was very useful. They lived in Lalldab; one all his life; but Septimius originally came from Auth.

Alcander was the most eloquent speaker in Lalldab; Septimius, the best author in Auth. Septimius was most inclined to be

good concerning generosity; Alcander concerning wisdom. Septimius, seeing a young lady, fell in love with her himself, and that rather affected his spirits: and when he recovered, he got into his own generous way again; but unfortunately for him, poor man! it happened that his generosity was too great: for it presently brought him into an illness, in which he died; and Alcander followed him. Need the reason be told?

Alcander, Septimius, Adoleo, and Opheilius, appear to be the favourite characters in the history of Allestone; the events of their lives are recorded in no less than three different tales, with considerable variation of circumstances. One of the stories begins thus :

“ Once upon a time, in Allestone, there happened to be rather a prevention in the kindness of the Allestonians; who were very much concerned about it: and especially three natives of the country, whose history I now intend to relate, and all the events

that occurred in their life, especially the chief ones."

Adoleo seems in this place to be the hero; and the first incident of the tale is made to consist in his meeting with his brother Septimius, and his brother-in-law Ophelius.

" Adoleo, at first, settled a plan of getting a few pairs of companions to serve him, and that he might serve them in the same manner. But after thinking that he would keep this plan, and impressing a resolution on his heart to do it, he found it was all wrong, and thought within himself, ' Ah! Fool that I was, to make a mistake!—If I think, I'll never do such a thing again. Now, I do not know what other plan to settle.'—Indeed, at first, he did not know what to do; but, after considering a good deal, found a suitable one at last; so he went, and sought for two or three men, whom he found: two of his relations (as one was his brother, and the other his brother-in-law,) whom he was very glad to see

again. They had been a very long time from him in St. Paulpon's, which is amazingly, excessively far from the hospitable dwelling in which he, his father, and mother lived. However, though he lived in Annabole both when he was a boy and a gentleman, he lived in a different house when grown up. He lived afterwards in happiness and ease with them ; but before, he was rather unfortunate. He lost his mother on his birth-day of eleven years old, and his father a month or two after. They all of them, however, always possessed surprising affection for one another, as they ought to do."

Their respective personal characters are summarily given, in nearly the same terms as those made use of in the former story. With regard to the leading dispositions, severally ascribed to them, the only variety is in that of Septimius, who is here represented as distinguished by virtue and respect to God. Their domestic habits are delineated in the following manner.

"Though Adoleo had no wife, he was very happy with these relations of his. Adoleo loved his two brothers so much, that he thought he could not be any happier with a wife; for they consoled him so much, when he was in either perplexity or trouble, that they served as one: and they were both of them ready to give up all consultation for their safety, that they might busy themselves about his. Adoleo was also as ready to do the same for them:.... People may see by these events the love which the Allestonians express for their friends and relations."

As the history advances forwards, we are given to understand, that "The kindness of the manners of Allestonians was by that time improved, as before. The natives were very happy about that; but still a little dissatisfaction lurked in the minds of the natives." It was our young author's constant practice, arising more from his own sense of right than from constraint, to acquiesce cheerfully in the decisions of his

of it in which their beloved relations (their mother and father) lived. Theirs was also a very pleasant residence, and Ablyth and Leucipius were brother and sister to one another. They did not marry according to the law, but lived together. They, soon after they had settled that residence, began to relate their private histories; Ablyth first, and then, of course, her brother. They were both of them highly entertained by one another's histories, and began to give cordial thanks for them. It was not long after, that the generally happy Ablyth fell into an uncommon Allestonian consumption, or illness of the lungs, called the Clungar. That hindered her business certainly; but during her illness, Leucipius watched her most tenderly; and as he had much knowledge of physic, he cured her in a few days. If he had not had so much knowledge of physic as he had, she would have been confined in bed a month or two. She, as soon as she had recovered her spirits enough to do so, made an opportunity of

going to see her father and mother, who had gone to another residence in Countib, while she was taken ill. Leucipius very willingly accompanied her, having also a desire to see his dear father and mother. Ablyth then related her illness. . . .

In addition to these stories, he made several incoherent attempts at dramatic composition. He also began a comic opera, to which he gave the title of *The Entertaining Assembly*, and noted down the supposed airs in musical characters, with a treble and bass. One of the canzonets runs in the following strain; and ridicules happily, without intending it, the soft and silly sentiments of our theatrical lyrics. The musical reader will be gratified by the information, that the time marked is  
“Andante Largo.”

domestic rulers. This feeling of propriety was easily applied to the doctrine of obedience to the laws of our country, which he did not fail to inculcate and exemplify in his visionary speculations; and, like a true moralist, he represents the exercise of the virtue as terminating in that satisfaction of mind, which constitutes its reward.

“ Ophelius at first settled a plan of getting into some concern about his household affairs, or to choose out some trade or profession; but at last the law directed that he should be in neither of those professions he had thought of. He was rather sorry for that, but he at last condescended to the law’s direction: and afterwards he found that he would be happier if he was neither.”

Alcander is now introduced, to complete the sociable party, and their peculiar characteristics are thus adjusted. “ Septimius was most inclined to be good concerning humility and respect to the Divine Being; Alcander concerning generosity; Ophelius

concerning wisdom, and Adoleo concerning virtue. In short, they were all very good in all ways; but Alcander had the mildest disposition. They were fellow-students together from that time. They all of them afterwards settled to take a small, but nice house, in Lalldab-street at Nimesby, where they passed all the rest of their lives in happiness and ease."

THE STORY OF  
ABLYTH AND LEUCIPIUS.

ONCE upon a time, in Allestone, the law directed that there should be an improvement, and that virtue should be still further advanced. The Allestonian people condescended to the law's direction: especially two Allestonians, the one named Ablyth, and the other Leucipius, who resided in a pleasant house in Bryne, far from the part

I wander till I find my love,  
 And oh! she looks for me.—*Repeated.*  
 I cannot think—*Diminuendo.*  
 I cannot think where she does go ;—  
 Tho' oh! she looks for me:—*2d time Adagio.*  
 Till I find her, I roam about,—*Allegro.*  
 Oh! till I find my love!—*Concluding Adagio and Pianissimo.*

On the back of this canzonet, is the following notice, in very beautiful printing characters :

**WHAT THE MAKER OF THE MUSIC MEANS.**

The thing on the other side is only imaginary music, made by Thomas Williams Malkin, who does not understand real music.

At the end of the book, containing the history of Allestone, is the following table of

## REMARKABLE EVENTS.

TRE A TY of Lalldab and Nimesby, A. D. 11.  
 The famous and remarkable invention of  
 building great bridges, such as Alsvey  
 Bridge, &c. 7 Jan. 14.

Adoleo Oldkick elects Unther, Bishop of  
 Auth, 7 Feb. 1.

Allestone burnt down, 18 Nov. 16.

Some Allestonians lost, and burnt in the fire,  
 others take refuge, 7 Dec. 2.

Allestone built up, 8 Mar. 17.

Lord Chancellor and King Adoleo the Third,  
 and Queen Othalia the Sixteenth, died,  
 3 Jan. 16.

Lalldab and Nimesby Castle built, Jan. 60.  
 Queen Othalia the Third proclaimed the  
 Lord Chancellor to improve Allestone;  
 16 Feb. and Jan. 28.

King Adoleo the Fourth born, 13th June 200.

After this follows the plan of “An Al-  
 manack of the Allestonian year 3.”

Though many of these names and events may appear too childish for the public eye, they are preserved with a view of shewing, how he enlisted every circumstance into his service, and copied the style and manner of its application. If I may be allowed to hazard an opinion, where my partiality and my feelings are so nearly concerned, I should say that the faculties of comparison and judgment were to the full as conspicuous in these devices, as imagination. In truth, the fictitious scenes which he has drawn, are borrowed principally from the natural workings of an ingenuous mind. They for the most part represent either the reality or the resemblance of what had happened, or might have happened to himself; the incidents being nearly confined to such particulars, as are connected either with the acquisition of juvenile knowledge, or the expression of benevolence and innocent affections. But when he attempts a sketch of general history, he convinces us how much he had read, and how well he understood

it. Political treaties, the discovery or improvement of arts, maxims of government and rules of life, are all mentioned in appropriate terms, collected from books, and treasured up in a retentive memory. He was continually upon the stretch, to overtake those who had gone before him; and though his powers were unequal to the contest, they were invigorated and kept in breath by the exercise of the chace. On the whole, when I reflect, how serious an attention I have endeavoured to attract, to the character and performances of a child, who never completed his seventh year, I tremble at my own temerity; but when I compare his efforts with those of other children, however promising they may be accounted, so unquestionable a superiority seems to warrant the presumption, and almost to impose the statement of the preceding circumstances, as an act of duty. The taste for personal anecdote, and for the exposure of domestic privacy, has of late years been grossly fed; and even where

the exhibition of individual life is not misplaced, it is difficult to arrange it with a proper attention to decorum. Yet were the fear of censure to deter those who, upon the best exercise of their discretion, think they have high instances of unknown merit to communicate, the world would lose many an instructive example, so that the page of biography must be left far too scanty, to supply materials for our researches into the economy of nature, or the condition of human life.

I have now performed the office of giving a full, and perhaps too detailed an account, both of this child's promise and performance, during his short life. It is time to enter on the more painful task, of relating the leading particulars, which occurred in the course of his last illness.

During the whole summer, up to the first of July, 1802, he had been in perfect health; and had been considered, by those who saw him but occasionally, and were therefore likely to make more accurate ob-

servation than ourselves, as gaining strength more than proportioned to his growth. On that day, he complained of an uneasy sensation in his throat, and appeared to be rather languid. Immediate advice was called in; but his indisposition at that time was apparently so trifling, as to have created little alarm in our minds. On the following morning, he had a shivering fit; and it was evident that his disorder had increased. Still he came down stairs as usual, and employed himself in his accustomed manner, in writing, reading, drawing, and other of those amusements, which had hitherto given scope to his faculties, and were now of sufficient interest, to beguile the sense of bodily infirmity by mental occupation.

On the morning of the third, he was so much worse, as to be obliged to remain in his bed, which he never quitted afterwards. His bowels became extremely tense; and his fever was now increased to a considerable height. He frequently wandered, and became occasionally confused and delirious

in the course of the following week. Yet it was never difficult for those, who were about him, to bring back his recollection: and on the recurrence of his consciousness, he frequently said, " I believe I have been dreaming."

It had been the decided opinion of Mr. Toulmin, who attended him from the first, that the disorder was altogether in the bowels. On Wednesday the seventh of July, Dr. Lister came to see him. With an entire approbation of the measures hitherto taken, he expressed a considerable degree of hope, that the patient might ultimately recover, since there were at the period in question no fatal symptoms. Dr. Lister, however, as well as Mr. Toulmin, represented the case as highly serious; and neither encouraged us to look forward to a speedy recovery, nor to rely with any confidence on a favourable event. He directed us to persevere in the use of frequent fomentations to the bowels, which had been applied almost from the beginning of the

complaint. I am the more minute in detailing his early treatment, in consequence of a circumstance, hereafter to be mentioned.

Towards the latter end of the week, and on Sunday and Monday, the eleventh and twelfth, we flattered ourselves that he was gaining ground. His pulse was less frequent; his mind became perfectly composed, and the reasons for indulging the expectation of his approaching convalescence, appeared gradually to gain force and probability. The natural propensity to cherish pleasing illusions, especially in the uncertain prospect of life or death, more frequently gives birth to the aggravated disappointment of the inevitable close, than any real change in the condition of the sufferer. But in the present case, there was a decisive and evident amendment, though its continuance was but for a few days.

On Thursday, the fifteenth, he became much worse; and complained of great pain in his left arm, which afterwards extended

to his legs. The state of his bowels became so alarming, that on Sunday the eighteenth, it was judged necessary to apply a blister, with a view of allaying internal inflammation, supposed to have existed from an early stage of the disorder. There had indeed been some grounds for supposing, that it was abated by more gentle methods; but it seemed to recur with additional violence, and to require the most active practice to keep it under, which the constitution and tender age of the patient would admit. In consequence of this application, aided by a very judicious and delicate medical treatment in other respects, the original disease, by the end of the week, was to all appearance in a course of being essentially relieved. But new evils were on the point of presenting themselves; for on Friday the twenty-third, we first perceived his legs, though the pain in them was much less than it had been, beginning to swell. This aggravation of his sufferings was continually on the increase; and by Sunday the twenty-fifth, it

had arrived at a most melancholy height. From his hips downward, he became so unwieldy from dropsy, that his position could not be changed but with the utmost inconvenience and fatigue to himself. On Monday, the body as well as limbs became very much swollen; and his respiration distressfully short and difficult. On Tuesday the twenty-seventh, there appeared an ulcer on the right hip, arising from pressure during his long confinement. This added greatly to his pain, and put his patience more severely to the test, than any former accident. On Wednesday, from the same cause, another broke out, similarly situated on the left hip. A day of such severe trial as this took from us all desire of making harassing experiments towards the resuscitation of the vital powers, and left no alternative but to contribute, by the offices of assiduity and consolation, to his composed and cheerful endurance of what was no longer to be warded off. In this respect, our wishes were not frustrated; for we had no reason

to believe, that he experienced any very considerable uneasiness after the evening of Wednesday.

On Thursday, the twenty-ninth, he made little or no complaint; but appeared to be much weaker, and gradually to sink under the weight of his accumulated ills. He had from this time those frequent and profuse cold dews, the certain fore-runners of dissolution, succeeded by a deadly paleness, which was never again lighted up even by a transient glow of colour.

On Saturday, the thirty-first of July, at ten in the morning, his medical friends saw him, and conversed with him, as he with them, after their usual manner. He took some nourishment in their presence; and though they had for many days prepared our minds for a fatal termination, they did not, on this their last visit, apprehend his release to be so near. His mind still remained unclouded and composed; while his spirits supported him under his increasing weakness, and in the exhausted state of his

corporeal powers. The principle of life seemed still, if I may so express myself, to struggle for the mastery, under the banner of a vigorous intellect and a happy organization. The field was indeed lost, but the power, which had hitherto supported the conflict, maintained its self-possession in the crisis of defeat.

Soon after eleven o'clock, an evident alteration took place. The languor and debility increased. His breathing became much more difficult than it had ever been; and his voice, which through his illness had been strong and clear, began to falter. Under this serious change of circumstances, when the hand of death was even now upon him, he remained firm and collected, without the slightest indication of displeasure or alarm. He spoke at intervals, deliberately and coherently, with his accustomed felicity of expression, and with his usual kindness to those who were round his bed, till he could no longer utter a sound. In a few minutes after he had ceased to articulate,

and a little before twelve o'clock, he sunk in the arms of his mother without a struggle or a groan. There was no expression of agony upon his features. His frame was neither agitated by convulsion, nor his faculties stupified by the drowsy tendency of his dropsical affection. It may indeed be affirmed, without danger of a paradoxical deviation from the sobriety of truth, that he excited more admiration under circumstances, from which human nature is apt to revolt, than had fallen to his share in the full career of mental and bodily improvement. He displayed the faculty of acquiring knowledge in health, and that of using it in sickness.

It is much to be lamented, that powers like his, resembling so nearly in their early promise, whatever has delighted and improved mankind in the works of mature genius, could never be rendered available to the general purposes of society. The argument from such a dispensation, for a future state of existence, has been already touched upon. Yet the ways of Providence,

in rendering desert sufficient to its own retribution in this life, were vindicated even in him, child as he was. The period during which he enjoyed the benefit of a sound body and animal spirits, was continually occupied in laying up mental treasures. The time was indeed short; but it lasted long enough to teach him the value of his own improvement, in the support it afforded him under the pressure of a severe illness, which he bore with exemplary patience and fortitude. Neither, in addition to this personal advantage, are we to overlook the record of unsophisticated philosophy, early attained and excellently applied, in so touching an instance of a mind, superior to the heaviest inflictions of pain. To compare his capacity of endurance with that of an adult under similar circumstances, would be extravagant; because the child has only to contend with his actual sufferings: the adult is attacked at once by the anxiety of the present, by the apprehension of the future, and often by the remorse of

the past. But however innocence and unconsciousness might detract from what we may call the moral fortitude of the present case, the breaking up of nature subjected the patient to many a languid and painful hour. When these were heaviest upon him, the assiduities of his attendants must have been unavailing, had he not known how to convert his former acquisitions to their solace. During the whole course of his disorder, his spirits were cheerful, and his understanding vigorous. He for the most part beguiled his own sense of weariness by the recollection of what he had formerly seen, done, or read. Little points of interest or information, which might be supposed to have impressed his mind with a transient sentiment, or to have struck accidentally in unison with the innate pleasure of knowledge, were equally present to his reflective powers, as when they first attracted his notice.

He frequently complained of pain, particularly during the dressing of his blister,

and his other wounds towards the close of his illness. His sensations at these times were frequently most acute. Yet, in the whole course of his affliction, he submitted patiently to whatever was judged expedient to be done for him. He took every medicine prescribed for him without a murmur. When he was reduced to such a state of weakness, as to be unable to move himself, or to turn in his bed without assistance, he would ask for help with a composure and complacency, which proved that he felt no disposition to repine. Peevishness and discontent are in some measure the accredited concomitants of sickness; so that a philosopher in health and manhood is often a child in the decay of old age. In the present case, those, whose office calls upon them to watch the effects of debility and approaching dissolution, under every variety of circumstances, will corroborate the suspicious testimony of a parent, and bear witness to the uniform gentleness, and tractable resignation of their patient.

When the illness of any friend had led us to speak generally on the subject, we had been accustomed to represent it as an occurrence, to which we must all, at some time or other, look forward, as likely to happen to ourselves. It had therefore been presented to his contemplation, as an almost unavoidable incident in the drama of life, to be supported with dignity, as far as might be possible, by the actor, and to be viewed by the spectator with calmness. In conformity with these impressions, too congenial with the character of his mind to be effaced from it, he met his sufferings. But the idea of death, which seldom torments childhood by anticipation, did not seem to enter his thoughts, or to interfere with his more auspicious topics of reflection. On the contrary, he talked of his recovery with pleasure and confidence. When he had been ill for three weeks, as his mother was sitting by his bed-side, he enquired, "Do you think my illness is half over, Mama?" She answered, that she hoped it was much

more than half over ; and asked him if he thought it had been very long. He replied, “ No: not very long.”

He was always happy when his mother was attending on him. Had he given way to the indulgence of a morbid waywardness, he would scarcely for a moment have dispensed with her absence. But though anxious to have her about him as much as possible, he was fully aware that she could not remain within his reach at night, on account of his little brother, who was at the breast. When she had staid as late as she could without inconvenience, she was accustomed to ask if he wished her to continue longer, or to perform any additional office for him. The general language of his reply was simply, with a smile, “ No, Mama! But I shall be glad when it is morning, that you may come to me again ! Good night, Mama.” When it is considered, that he slept but little, and even then by unquiet and interrupted snatches, so that his nights were restless and uneasy, the merit of so ready

and good tempered a sacrifice to reason and propriety was far from trifling. He once said, during the latter part of his illness, “ I wonder when the time will come, for me to have a settled sleep all through the night again.”

On Saturday, the third of July, which was the first day of his being confined to his bed, his mother was in the morning obliged to be rather longer absent from him, than she could have wished, owing to some little family concerns, which required her attention. On the following morning, he said, “ Mama, I am glad it is Sunday to-day.” On being asked, Why so? He replied, “ Because, Mama, I remember that in the fourth commandment, we are told that Sunday is to be observed as a day of rest; and I therefore suppose you will have more leisure to stay with me to-day than you had yesterday.”

If at any time a word occurred to his recollection, of which he did not know the precise import, he always desired to have

it explained. He was indeed to the full as eager after information on any subject, happening at the moment to engage his thoughts, as he had shewn himself at any former period. He one day asked the meaning of the word facetious. When an explanation had been given him, his mother asked him if he could tell her to what part of speech it was to be referred? He immediately replied, "I know from your explanation of it, Mama, that it must be a noun adjective."

On another occasion, without being at all led to the subject by any previous introduction of the topic, he said, "There is a word in the Prayer Book, which I do not understand. It is in the Litany. Privy Conspiracy! What does that mean?"

In this manner did he amuse himself, and ward off the sense of his own situation, during the wearisome hours of his lingering illness. His questions and remarks served occasionally to enliven the melancholy of his friends, till the recurrence of the con-

viction, that the present bond of union was on the point of being rent asunder, again brought their thoughts to their original tenor of regret and grief.

He frequently desired to have books at his bed-side, which he would request his mother to read to him. In his intervals of comparative ease, he would take pleasure in turning them over for himself. As a singular instance of technical recollection, especially in so young a child, the following circumstance may be mentioned. When he wished to hear any thing which he had before read, he could not only tell in what book to find it, but could generally fix on the number of the page, where the particular passage occurred. His dissected maps, from which he had very early acquired his knowledge of geography, afforded him pleasure and interest to the last. He had some counties of England in his hands, reading the names of the towns in them, within half an hour of his dissolution.

We could not help considering it as a

remarkable result of his illness, that from its earliest period, he ceased to talk of the imaginary country, which had hitherto been so copious a source of amusement to him. He named it only once, and then transiently, and as if by accident. It was indeed at a moment of considerable estrangement, when he had been speaking incoherently of King James. On being asked, Whether it was King James of England whom he meant? He answered, "No! It was only a King James of his own imaginary country."

I had, with the partiality of a father, for a time persuaded myself, that this forbearance arose from a consciousness of the pernicious effect, which the indulgence of wild and visionary ideas might have produced upon his brain. Consistent with this view of the case, was the mention of it, only when the general predominance of reason over his mind was suspended. It was natural enough to be led into this error by considering, that his memory was still retentive of every

other preceding impression, of which various instances have just been given. It seemed therefore as if he was aware, how strong was the necessity of accommodating his thoughts, as well as his outward treatment, to the peculiar situation in which he stood. But cooler reflection has at length convinced me, that I was misled in ascribing a casual circumstance to a high and extraordinary cause. We ourselves dreaded the recurrence of the topic, lest the reins should be loosened to every fantastic excursion of a disordered temperament. His mind therefore, when capable of entertaining them, was supplied with other speculations; and as the sports of fancy, when in the fulness of her health and vigour, had never assumed an undue or dangerous influence, they now probably subsided and became sober of themselves.

At the time of his illness, his little brother Frederic was about half a year old. From the hour of this child's birth, Thomas, as may be seen by some of the foregoing

letters, watched his progress with more than a brother's pleasure. He very frequently used to speak of the delight he should experience in instructing "the nice little Frederic," when he should be old enough to be taught. Though it might have been expected, that the shattered condition of his nervous system, alternately irritable and languid, would have rendered him indifferent about those, whom it was not necessary for him to see, he enquired after both his brothers every day, with his usual interest and kindness. He was always anxious to know how Benjamin employed himself, and frequently desirous of having his company. Frederic was brought to him every day at his particular request. He would then look at him, and speak to him, with the most gentle voice and affectionate countenance. Once towards the close of his illness, he repeated "Pretty Frederic" so frequently, and talked to him so much, that his mother was fearful, lest he should exhaust his spirits. She therefore cautioned

him, not to fatigue himself by too great exertion. He replied, “ I like to talk to him, Mama, because I think the continuation of my voice makes him continue to look at me ;—and I find this to be one of the times, when Frederic has his best looks.”

On the evening before he died, both his brothers were brought to him. After talking a little while very cheerfully, he expressed a wish that Benjamin might be kept to drink tea in the room with him. At the same time he added, “ You had better, Benjamin, go and amuse yourself till tea-time with the box of letters, and spell sentences as we used to do together.” While his mother was standing at the foot of the bed, with Frederic in her arms, he looked at him with the utmost complacency, without taking off his eye from him for a considerable time. Not a word was uttered. It seemed, however, as if he thought by his mother’s manner, that she expected him to address his brother in his customary tone of affection. After two or three efforts to gra-

tify her, which seemed to distress him, he at last succeeded, and called “Frederic,” for the last time. He had never before this moment betrayed the slightest indication, that his organs of speech were at all impaired. Neither did he afterwards in the least labour in his utterance, till within the last hour of his life: but he seemed to find the succession of sounds in the word Frederic rather difficult to articulate, and would not repeat an attempt, in which he had nearly failed.

A very short time before he was seized with his fatal illness, a remarkable circumstance occurred. Minds, prone to superstition, are apt to look back upon the omen after the event. Such a retrospect might have impelled many to construe it into a warning, suggested by the intervention of a preternatural influence on his spirit. Viewed without reference to any such agency, it still deserves notice; but only so far as it tends to prove, how early and how deeply the belief of immortality had taken root

among his intellectual convictions, and its fairest hopes engrafted themselves on his imagination.

His mother had been conversing with him on the happiness and advantage of a virtuous life, as connected with the prospect of a world to come. Thomas, after having interchanged many remarks on the subject, with a strong expression of interest, and in a high tone of animation, exclaimed, “Do you know, Mama, that what we have been talking of makes me almost wish not to live long, that I may have the pleasure of mounting!” He spoke this with unusual energy, and a countenance strongly lighted up: with a marked emphasis in the conclusion, raising his hand above his head, and following it with uplifted eyes. He seemed for the moment to be raised to a high pitch of enthusiasm.

On Sunday, the first of August, the day after he expired, a medical gentleman of considerable experience from his standing in the profession, and formerly in habits of

intimacy with some part of our family, paid us a visit of enquiry and condolence. In the course of conversation, this gentleman threw out some distant hints of doubts, which he entertained, as to the nature of the disease. On being urged to explain more fully what he had but covertly insinuated, he gave us to understand it as his opinion, that the ostensible complaints were altogether symptomatic, and that the pressure of water on the brain was the real cause of our child's death. Besides stating several technical reasons, too profound for our ignorance to appreciate, he professed to consider the acknowledged largeness of the head, and even the high talent, in which so many had delighted, as strongly corroborating his own exposition of the case. There was perhaps nothing else within the limits of human ingenuity, which could have added the pang of self-reproach to the natural depression of melancholy. Were we to form our systems on the credibility of such suggestions, who would kill the darling of

his heart with knowledge? The apprehensive nature of parents must shudder at the first scintillations of common sense; and fancy death to lie in ambush behind every show of intelligence, the grave to spring a mine under the feet of genius. The skill of education would but betray its victims into the clutches of the universal enemy: the pen of the writer would become a poisoned arrow; the voice of the teacher would only be heard to sing a dirge over the extinction of his species. But besides the revolting tendency of the observation, it was entirely new and unexpected. Throughout the progress of the disorder, the head in particular had appeared to be perfectly free. The delirium, to which he was occasionally subject, may perhaps be thought to invalidate this assertion: but the effect was only temporary, and was therefore never considered as indicating the seat of the complaint. His faculties have already been shewn to have retained their wonted vigour and clearness to the last, and only to have been suspended for

a short time, during the paroxysms of pain, or a more than ordinary height of fever. That his head was large and of a remarkable form, must have been obvious to the most indifferent examiner. Yet, so far from giving rise to gloomy forebodings, its shape and character had often been admired by artists, and especially by our late friend Mr. Banks, as tallying exactly with the most approved models, and agreeing with the established principles of beauty. Now the idea of beauty in the human frame can never be disjoined, at least not justly, from that of healthy and perfect conformation; so that the taste of the designer must stand corrected by the closer investigations of the anatomist. We had the testimony of both.

Our confidence in the hands, to which we had committed so near an interest, was great; nor was our faith easily to be shaken. But it was impossible for any of the parties concerned to be satisfied without a further enquiry. Happily for all, the doubt was

proposed, before it was too late to examine its foundation. For this purpose, Mr. Cline, Dr. Lister, Dr. Pett, Mr. Toulmin, and Mr. Smith, met on Tuesday the third of August, when Mr. Cline opened the head. It was to us an unspeakable relief, to find it ascertained, that there was not the most slender ground for the opinion advanced. The skull was capacious and full; and the brain unusually large. It appeared to be in the most healthy state, and perfect in all its parts. Neither was there any where about the head the least visible defect, to justify the suspicion of disease. Its internal structure, when examined, was found to correspond most justly with the beauty of its exterior form.

The body was afterwards opened. The appearances were such, as to convince all present, that the complaint was fully understood from the first. The interest of our medical friends in their success we had all along experienced to have been anxious and unremitting: we had now the pleasure of

finding their skill and judgment confirmed. The state of the intestines was precisely as Dr. Lister and Mr. Toulmin had expected and described. There had been a high degree of inflammation, and parts of them were mortified. The liver, kidneys, and spleen, were perfectly sound. The lungs were found not to have been in the least degree affected; and the general organization was so complete, as to have given the fairest promise of life and health.

I am sensible, that if I professed to write as a physiologist, this last remark would be open to controversy. The causes, which operate to the decay of the human frame, often lie beyond the reach of ocular inspection, and even of probable inference. It were presumptuous therefore, in any case, to repose with confidence on the outward tokens of longevity. The bulk of the giant is equally assailable with the diminutive stature of the dwarf: the shrub bends to the blast, which uproots the oak. High health sucks the contagion into its vitals,

which morbid debility either escapes, or entertains in a mitigated and supportable degree. Yet are we justified, when reconciling ourselves to our lot as men, rather than arguing as philosophers, in fostering those expectations, not merely which are in their own nature proveable, but which are not actually disproved by any positive evidence. It is in this loose and popular sense only, that I mean to hazard the remark in question. At all events, it has been among our most available consolations to believe, that the cause of our calamity was neither inherited, nor derived from any constitutional defect. Still more is it essential to our peace of mind to be convinced, that it was not brought on by any injudicious efforts of ours, to push his intellectual ambition beyond the limits of his physical strength. To what then do we attribute it? With all becoming diffidence, on a subject so enveloped and mysterious as that of life or death, we venture to place it among those accidents in the system, to which the old

and young, the healthy and infirm, are without exemption and alike exposed. Had this fatal accident not occurred, with so happy a temperament of mind and constitution, with a body robust and well proportioned, there was, up to the time of almost his only illness, at least the usual probability of his arriving at manhood. What that manhood might have been, it is now fruitless to conjecture, and would perhaps be only painful to know, were the knowledge of what we have lost within our grasp. At the same time, we may unreservedly ground on our experience of his infancy the belief, that whether he had devoted his studies, in after-life, to the fine arts, to elegant literature, or to the discovery and exemplification of the higher truths and severer sciences, he might have done some honour to his age and country; not by ranking high among its artificial orders, but by useful labours, and by the contributions of patriotism and talent to the ge-

neral accumulation of whatever is thought best, wisest, and worthiest, in the social state of man. Intercepted in this career, he now rests in peace. His star has faded from among the glories of this world: yet we believe that he still must occupy his sphere of usefulness in the system of creation, and pay homage to that Being who brought him out of nothing, but who will not reduce the lowest of his accountable creatures to that from which they came.

## **APPENDIX.**



## APPENDIX.

THE following letters, &c. have been found, too late to be inserted in their proper places.

MY DEAR FATHER,

..... But, the praise of God is great love. Well! I should like to go to Heaven very much. Then, you know, I should see my little sister Mary, and my little brother John, that are dead. So, they go to be buried! I think it is a very nice thing to go to heaven! Well! And then we should see our heavenly Father, and our Saviour. He has got a light round his head; our Saviour has! .... When we go, we shall see Judas, who brought the soldiers to seize our Saviour, and put him to death: and so

he went. There was St. Bartholomew, St. John, St. Peter, St. Matthew: but these were all the Saints that I know of.

T. W. M.

October 24, 1799.

MY DEAR MISS —

I AM very much obliged to you for the book of quadrupeds and of birds. I drew two or three sea eagles; and in the original found the sea eagle very beautifully marked. The lanner is somewhat less than the buzzard. The quill feathers of the lanner are dusky. I now learn Latin, as I believe you know: and I have got pretty far through my exercise book. The length of the ringtail is twenty inches: its claws are black. Grandfather has a very large garden; and in summer he had some of the flower called rose-campion; and some roses:

but they are all gone.—So now he has no flowers at all. . . . .

T. W. MALKIN.

Dec. 14, 1800.

Hackney, Sunday, Dec. 21, 1800.

MY DEAREST MRS. P—,

I AM so much concerned to you, I should often like to see you. As for Mrs. B—, I shall think she must be very miserable, because Mr. B— is dead: so now her little boy has no father, or nobody to teach him Latin and Greek; so, you know, what a sad thing that must be! The book of quadrupeds, I think, is a very useful book to me. My Mental Improvement also is a very useful book; for I too learn a great deal from it. The serval, which is beautifully spotted, is extremely fierce. These circumstances, which to me have been very curious, now are less curious.

THE STORY  
OF AN  
OFFICER'S FAMILY IN ALLESTONE.  
FOR MY DEAREST MOTHER.

PART I.

AN Allestonian family, one which was in the greatest rank and fortune, at least for the subjects of the king, were very happy on the coming of a little healthy baby, which family God had given reason to know that it would come.--According to your recommendation, I will now go on to the beginning of his education. The wise education of the parents gave the son, named in Latin Geoffricus Lanleius, great instruction in learning the alphabet. The progress that he made, having a spelling-book of the same edition as my own, enabled him to attend to the rules for reading. His progress was

not discovered, till on a day he shewed it so much, that Mr. and Mrs. Lanley began to think that he might begin to learn Latin, Greek, &c. as he had before learnt well to spell. This Latin began to occur to his learning, on the first of May, in the year in which he was advancing to four years old. But unfortunately, as his mother knew more of Latin than his father, he could hardly get on from the third till the twenty-first of May, as his maternal teacher was then delivered of a baby, whom his father christened —. Universal applause succeeded to the father, as he exercised his great diligence and knowledge of the little service ; and this succeeded especially in Geoffry, who was then present. An undertaking was made, by Mr. Lanley and Geoffry, in which nothing is so surprising as Geoffry's cleverness in the occurrence of a Journey to P—t. This undertaking was made on the eighth day of the month. They, instead of going that day, spent the rest of it in wise calculations for their journey. According to their

spending, they at first calculated the sum that this would afford them: next how to get a conveyance, which would convey their baggage neatly, &c. and all those little accommodations, which are necessary in a journey. Next, how to spend the time at the House of Commons, and Lords, as they were partly to spend the time in both places.—Night arrived, at least the hour of ten. Geoffry, till his sleep, continued his reflections. The next morning, in the course of hours, came, of the day in which they were to go out. . . . .

T H E E N D.









